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**A new look at the 1956 Hungarian Revolution: Soviet
opportunism, American acquiescence**

Swartz, Martin Ben, Ph.D.

Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (Tufts University), 1988

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A NEW LOOK AT THE 1956 HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION:
SOVIET OPPORTUNISM, AMERICAN ACQUIESCENCE

A thesis

Presented to the Faculty

of

The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy

by

MARTIN BEN SWARTZ

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

AUGUST 1988

ABSTRACT

The central thesis of this study is that the post-Stalin Soviet leadership was deeply divided by factional rivalries and that this competition for power at the apex of the Communist system had important implications for Soviet policy in Eastern Europe and with respect to the United States. At the time of the uprising in Hungary at least one group in the Politburo felt that Soviet strength in Eastern Europe was overextended and that therefore some sort of compromise might have to be made with Imre Nagy and his followers. It is a reflection of the influence of this group that for a full week following the outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution there was indecision in Moscow on how to proceed. Only after it had become apparent that the United States would not take any steps to support the Hungarians did Khrushchev and his colleagues give the order to intervene.

For its part, the Eisenhower Administration failed to recognize that the splits within the Soviet leadership - of which the President and his advisors were quite aware - left the United States an opening to try to prevent a Soviet invasion. Despite American success in supporting Yugoslavia in its resistance to Stalin, and despite the explicit request of the Imre Nagy regime for diplomatic help, the President made no effort to support the Hungarians' struggle. Instead, the Administration acted from the

start of the crisis as if the Soviet leadership already had decided to intervene, though this was in fact not the case. In not seeking to reverse the Soviet occupation of Hungary, the Eisenhower Administration helped vindicate those Soviet leaders who argued that the USSR could continue to control all of Eastern Europe without fear of a confrontation with the United States.

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PREFACE: A NOTE ON SOURCES

This study relies heavily on three types of primary sources: government documents, memoirs, and interviews of former decision makers. Not surprisingly, government documents made up a large percentage of my research only in the chapters dealing with the policy of the United States. In the chapters dealing with Soviet policy, I was able to use collections compiled in the West (see the bibliography) of Soviet and other Eastern bloc communiqués, Party correspondences, and public statements, but because my main interest in the study has been in the internal deliberations of the governments involved, the most useful documentation on Soviet and Hungarian decisions is, for obvious reasons, unavailable. That does not mean that material from Pravda or Szabad Nép is not useful, since in dealing with a closed society it can be tremendously revealing, only that the inside documents (such as those available in an American Presidential library) would provide a much fuller insight. But I will return to the question of Soviet and other Communist sources below.

Almost all the American documents which I cite in this study can be found at either the United States National Archives in Washington, DC or at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library in Abilene, Kansas. Between one-third and one-half of the US documents were declassified at my request between 1985 and 1988 in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, while many others were declassified within the past five years as part of the Document

Mandatory Review process which the government routinely conducts. The bulk of the material upon which Chapter 3 (United States Policy in Eastern Europe, 1944-1956) and Chapter 4 (The United States and The Hungarian Revolution) is based, therefore, has only very recently been made available for public study. Among the most interesting material at the Eisenhower Library were the "National Security Council Studies," the NSC "Memoranda of Discussion" (both included in the Library's collection entitled "The Office of the Special Assistant of National Security Affairs"), transcripts of phone calls by the President and by the Secretary of State, White House and State Department memoranda, letters written by principal decision makers, and State Department Memoranda of Conversation. The documents at the National Archives included cables sent by the staff of the US Legation in Budapest, instructions and other information originating with the State Department, and cables from other American diplomatic missions, such as Moscow, Prague, Belgrade, Bucharest, and Vienna.

Of course, many American documents from 1956 are still classified, and it may be quite a long time, if ever, before all this material is made public. Such is the handicap under which a researcher must work. I have been careful to draw conclusions only from the documents which are available, and not to try to guess what has been concealed, and why. However, I do not adhere to conspiracy theories or to the view that some overridingly important fact or development has been suppressed. I believe that the general portrayal of American policy toward Eastern

Europe and toward the Hungarian Revolution which I present in this paper is accurate, although the details of specific high-level meetings or undertakings may still be obscured. The reader will note that I devote a number of pages to the question of the role of the CIA in US policy toward Eastern Europe in the postwar years, if only to sort out the truth from several fantastic theories which have been put forward from time to time. My efforts to do so were hampered by the unwillingness of the CIA to declassify any of the material which I requested from them. Nevertheless, I believe that the facts being withheld relate to operational and tactical details and not to the overall strategy of the Eisenhower Administration.

Memoirs, like government documents, are available in much greater numbers on the Western side. Many top officials of the Eisenhower Administration have published their memoirs, including President Eisenhower and Vice President Nixon; State Department officials Beam, Bohlen, Johnson, Murphy, and others; CIA officials Colby, De Silva, McCargar, Rositzke, and others; and White House, FBI, and other officials as well. In each case, the personal recollections, accounts, and histories are a good starting point for further investigation. In some cases comparisons between the various accounts reveal important differences of interpretation or of fact. While genuine memoirs of Communist officials are rarer (death in office or disappearance upon dismissal being much more common on the other side), there have been a number of particularly useful accounts written by defectors or retired former officials. In Chapter 1,

Repression and Revolution in Hungary, 1944-1956, for example, I made use of the memoirs of several prominent Hungarians during the early 1950s, including Julius Háý, Endre Márton, and Béla Szász. Similarly, in Chapter 2, Soviet Policy in Eastern Europe, 1944-1956, and in Chapter 5, The Soviet Union and the Hungarian Revolution, I drew upon memoirs by several Yugoslavs, including Milovan Djilas, Edvard Kardelj, and Veljko Micunovic, and at least two books often attributed to their Soviet namesakes, Khrushchev Remembers and The Penkovskiy Papers. In each of these books, but particularly the Kardelj and Khrushchev volumes, one must keep in mind that the authors - whether real or alleged we cannot be sure - often seek to disinform the reader. The analyst must therefore be extremely careful in the weight he places upon these sources. I should stress, however, that the Hungarian memoirs which I have listed, as well as the Djilas and Micunovic books, are almost unanimously considered to be accurate, and in my own research I found no reason to call these sources into question. On those occasions in which I did have a problem with the accuracy of a source, I have so indicated in the relevant footnote.

The third type of primary source material which I used was oral history interviews. Between 1984 and 1987, I conducted roughly twenty-five interviews of former American and Hungarian officials involved in the period covered by this study, and have included eighteen of these interviews as appendices to this paper (the others were excluded either because the subject was unwilling to have his name used or because in my opinion the

information was not sufficiently first-hand to warrant its inclusion). A number of these interviews brought to light information which (as far as I was able to discern) had not been previously known. In my examination of the secondary literature connected with the Hungarian Revolution (and there is quite a bit), for instance, I did not find any reference to the fact that on November 3, a representative of the Polish government offered to host negotiations aiming to revise the Warsaw Treaty, but George Heltai told me that such an offer was indeed made, and Miklós Vásárhelyi was able to confirm that Imre Nagy had ordered that a top-level Hungarian delegation be sent to Warsaw for such talks. Nor had I expected to learn, as the Budapest Legation's Political Advisor, Tom Rogers, told me, that nearly the only instructions the Legation staff received from Washington on what steps to take during the Revolution were transcripts of the Department's press conferences. These are only two of the many fascinating points which were raised.

I have included texts of the eighteen interviews not only to supplement the arguments made in the paper, but also as a resource for future researchers (after all, someone writing on this same topic ten or fifteen years from now may not have the same opportunity to speak with former officials that I did). My interest in conducting interviews of this nature grew out of my participation in the Oral History Project of the Fletcher School's International Security Studies Program, in which I was part of a group of graduate students that was given the unique opportunity to help prepare, conduct, and process oral history

interviews with several prominent former Soviet Bloc and American decision makers. The skills which I developed in this Project served me well when I was ready to carry out my own research. In addition, in preparing this paper I was able to make use of a number of the transcripts which the Oral History Project compiled, particularly those of Jan Sejna, Ladislav Bittman, Ilya Dzhirkvelov, and General Andrew Goodpaster. I also consulted many of the oral histories on file at the Eisenhower Library, at the Seeley D. Mudd Library, Princeton University, and in the Bakhmeteff Archives, Columbia University.

Oral history interviews of this nature can provide important insights, but they have their limitations. Memories are not always fully reliable, and occasionally there may be a tendency subconsciously to recast events in order to make a particular point. I tried very hard, therefore, to confirm and substantiate the points raised in the course of the interviews. Often, the testimony in one interview will be corroborated by replies in others. In other cases, a certain document may bear out the point being made. However, there are also times when it is simply not possible satisfactorily to verify a certain assertion, while on other occasions there are disagreements among the officials interviewed. In such cases I have indicated in the relevant footnote that the point being made is not uncontested, or that there is a dispute over the facts involved. Just the same, I usually included my own judgment as to what I felt was the correct analysis or interpretation of each issue, but the reader is welcome to draw his own conclusions. Indeed, part of

the reason for including the texts of the interviews as appendices is in order that the reader may best be able to do so.

There is quite a lot of secondary material available on the topics which I cover in the paper, and I have listed in the bibliography the secondary sources which I found most useful. A few sources were especially helpful as background, specifically many of the articles in The New Leader in 1956 and 1957; a number of pieces in Problems of Communism; books by Robert Conquest, William Griffith, Gavriel Ra'anan, and Adam Ulam; studies of the Hungarian Revolution by Miklós Molnár, Ferenc Váli, and Paul Zinner; and the outstanding analyses prepared by the staff of Radio Free Europe in Munich. Many of these sources deal in great detail and extremely effectively with the content of Soviet, Hungarian, and other Communist Bloc newspapers, journals, and radio services in the period leading up to and including 1956, as well as with other forms of esoteric communication so important in closed societies - such as nuances within addresses given at CPSU Congresses. I have not attempted to duplicate this work, but rather have used it as a starting point for further study. I feel that the depth and richness of the information which I have been able to draw upon from the available government documents, personal memoirs, and oral history interviews has validated this approach.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most dangerous assertions in contemporary international affairs is the pledge of the Soviet leadership to intervene militarily in any state whose ruling Communist Party is about to be driven from power.¹ Successive leaders of the Soviet Union have cited as justification for their rule the abstract correctness of the Marxist theory of history, by which the coming to power of "Socialism" brings to an end the historical process; the Bolsheviks' raison d'etat stems from their claim to be the Guardians of History, the sole interpreters of how the inevitable rise of Communism is to be expedited, achieved, and - most importantly - defended.

To date, a ruling Communist Party has never been dislodged from power (excluding the shortlived Soviet Republics in Bavaria and Hungary after World War I and in northern Iran after World War II), and Moscow knows full well that because of this record, the idea that Communist gains are irreversible has earned a certain international credibility. With it has come greater heed to the Marxist claim that "Socialism" is globally inevitable.

1. This central idea, which in the West has been labeled the "Brezhnev Doctrine," or more usefully, the "Doctrine of Limited Sovereignty," was articulated in the aftermath of the Czech crisis of 1968: "Just as, in Lenin's words, a man living in a society cannot be free from the society, a particular socialist state, existing in a system of other states composing the socialist community, cannot be free from the common interests of that community." See Sergei Kovalyev, "Sovereignty and International Duties," Pravda, September 26, 1968. While not stated as eloquently following the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, the principle was the same.

But just how far is the Kremlin genuinely prepared to go in order to keep the record intact, to defend the gains of Communism? How great a risk are the Soviet leaders willing to accept for the sake of preserving the principle that the spread of Communism can never be reversed?

The answers to such questions depend to a great degree on the steps taken, particularly during a crisis, by the government of the United States. To the extent that the US abstains from abetting anti-Communist movements within Communist states, the leaders of the Soviet Union are largely freed from having to face the risk of world war in making the decision of whether to save a given Communist regime. Since 1947, however, American policy in general has sought only to contain Communism - to stem its spread - and not to challenge Communist rule in those areas where its hold on power already has been consolidated.² The asymmetries in Soviet and American strategy have been aptly noted by Paul Seabury:

For forty years, as the West has coexisted with the Soviets, the latter have persisted in systematically and deliberately destabilizing the free world and all regions outside their sway. The West, on the other hand, forswearing any forward designs, has kept up its guard; it has waited, like Mr. Micawber, for something to turn up.³

-
2. What efforts there have been to bring about the downfall of a Communist regime have been halfhearted, such as the Bay of Pigs operation in 1961. A covert invasion of Albania by American and British trained expatriates was crushed by Communist forces in 1950 when Moscow was tipped off by Kim Philby. See Chapter 3.
 3. Paul Seabury, "Reinspecting Containment," in Beyond Containment: Alternative American Policies Toward the Soviet

Successive Presidential administrations (even those during the years of substantial American nuclear advantage over the USSR) have eschewed taking any tangible steps to promote democracy in Communist ruled states, due mainly to an unnecessarily cautious unwillingness to enter into political confrontations with the Soviet Union. American leaders have never sought to test the extent of Moscow's commitment to the international Communist cause. The result has been that the United States has failed to discover which of the Kremlin's many proclaimed ideological commitments are seen in Moscow as vital Soviet interests.

What the United States has been able to do moderately well has been to work with Communist regimes which, for their own reasons, enact anti-Soviet policies. Seemingly shelving the hope of ever seeing non-Communist regimes come to power in states already under Communist rule, American policy makers have contented themselves with rewarding those Communist regimes which take steps away from Moscow. Yugoslavia and China, for example, and to a lesser extent Romania, in recent years have been the beneficiaries of overtures from the government of the United States. Officials in Washington have found encouraging Tito or Deng to be far less risky than backing Dubcek or Walesa, though the results are not necessarily spectacular.

It is my contention that America's inability to act effectively on behalf of the Czechs in 1968 or the Poles in 1981 can be attributed in large measure to the precedent established

Union, ed. Aaron Wildavsky (San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1983), p. 58.

by the failure of the Eisenhower Administration to take any meaningful steps in support of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. I do not feel that the defeat of Imre Nagy and his supporters at the hands of the Red Army beginning on November 4, 1956 was in any way inevitable, though this is what most accounts of the era would have us believe. On the contrary, I believe that at the time of the Hungarian Revolution the leadership of the Soviet Union was bitterly divided, with at least one faction in the Central Committee Politburo (then called the Presidium) prepared to accept the Revolution as a fait accompli and perhaps even to withdraw from Hungary altogether.

In my view, the Soviet decision to intervene in Hungary with the aim of overthrowing Nagy and installing a regime more to the Kremlin's liking was made only on October 31, a decision which was facilitated, it seems to me, by several unwise and amateurish American efforts to assure the Soviet leadership that it was not President Eisenhower's objective to make Hungary an American military ally. Despite John Foster Dulles' often stated interest in trying to liberate the countries of Eastern Europe, American diplomatic efforts on behalf of the Hungarians in 1956 were nearly nonexistent. Indeed almost from the moment of Eisenhower's inauguration, the President and his advisors were more concerned with reaching agreements with the Soviet leaders on arms control and regional issues than with taking calculated risks for the sake of freedom in Eastern Europe. This was particularly unfortunate, because the Eisenhower years were the period in which the position of the United States relative to the

Soviet Union was at its strongest. Later US administrations would be less able to put pressure on the Kremlin.

By the same token, the time between Stalin's death in March 1953 and the Hungarian Revolution was the period in which Moscow's ability to hold on to all of the territories which Soviet forces had come to occupy during World War II was most in question. It is quite doubtful whether the majority of the Soviet leaders ever expected to maintain permanent control over this entire area, but Soviet success in suppressing the Hungarian Revolution was an important turning point. After 1956, no competitor in the struggle for power within the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union could advocate concessions in Eastern Europe and expect to prevail. It seems to me that the inability of the Western powers, most notably the United States, to take any sort of forceful stand on the Hungarians' behalf almost certainly marked a shift in the Soviet leaders' understanding of the world "correlation of forces" in favor of the Soviet Union. Not by coincidence were the years after 1956 marked by a new and dangerous aggressiveness in Soviet policy.

CHAPTER ONE:

REPRESSION AND REVOLUTION IN HUNGARY, 1944-1956

The Communists Take Power, 1944-1949

Soviet domination of Hungary began with the occupation of Hungary by the Red Army in 1944. The establishment and consolidation of Communist rule took place over a period of five years against the will of the vast majority of Hungarians. Historically the people of Hungary bore no love for Russia, whose military forces had crushed Hungary's liberal nationalist revolt in 1849 and had fought against Hungary in the First World War.

The coming to power of the Bolsheviks in Russia was followed in 1919 by the short-lived attempt to establish a Soviet regime in Hungary, and in the years after by Communist efforts to sabotage Admiral Horthy's regime. The Hungarian government of the interwar period for the most part ruled without fear of the far left, however, as Horthy was able to exploit popular resentment against the Trianon treaty and against the atrocities of the Béla Kun regime. The minuscule Hungarian Communist Party (HCP) was left ineffective and without support.⁴

During World War II Hungary backed the Axis powers, more out of the desire to revise the country's frontiers than from National Socialist sympathies, though these were hardly absent.

4. "In fact, the party hardly existed. In 1930, at the time of the Second Congress, it had about one thousand members, according to official estimates, which are in any case not reliable." Miklós Molnár, A Short History of the Hungarian Communist Party (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978), p. 29.

The choice appeared apt while the Wehrmacht was winning, since several territories of the pre-Trianon Hungarian state were recovered: in November 1938, in the wake of Munich, Hungary was awarded the southern zone of Slovakia; in March 1939, following the disappearance of Czechoslovakia, Hungary was given the Carpatho-Ukraine (Ruthenia); in the "Vienna Award" of August 1940, Hungary was ceded a large portion of Transylvania, as part of the price Romania was forced to pay for a German guarantee; and in April 1941, following the Axis defeat of Yugoslavia, Hungary was awarded the Bachka and Baranya regions of the northern Vojvodina.⁵ Yet the eventual reversal of Nazi fortunes on the battlefield brought with it harsh treatment of Germany's satellites by the victorious Soviet forces. Hungary was compelled to relinquish its newly acquired areas (to Czechoslovakia,⁶ Romania, and Yugoslavia, respectively) and to add insult to injury was also forced to give up five villages on the south bank of the Danube (opposite Bratislava) to Czechoslovakia.

Arriving literally in the boxcars of the Red Army were the "Muscovites," Communists of Hungarian origin who had spent the

-
5. Robert Lee Wolff, The Balkans in Our Time (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1974), p. 202. Hungary also annexed small areas of Slovenia and Croatia.
 6. The Czechs were in turn forced to cede the Carpatho-Ukraine to the Soviet Union. See F. Nemeč and V. Moudry, The Soviet Seizure of Subcarpathian Ruthenia (Toronto: William B. Anderson, 1955). Also Josef Korběl, The Communist Subversion of Czechoslovakia, 1938-1948: The Failure of Coexistence (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1959), pp. 101-108. The Czechs did manage to keep southern Slovakia, with its Hungarian-speaking majority, for themselves.

war years (and in some cases, many years prior to that) in the Soviet Union, and whom Moscow hoped would be able in due time to forge a Communist regime in Hungary. The most prominent Muscovites were Mátyás Rákosi, Ernő Gerő, Mihály Farkas, Imre Nagy, József Révai, and Zoltán Vas.⁷ Rákosi, the leader of the group, had been jailed by Horthy for sixteen years before being exchanged to the USSR along with Vas in 1940, in return for the Hungarian battle flags of 1848-49. Rákosi's two lengthy sentences in Horthy's prisons had made him a cause celebre internationally, and it was largely for this reason that Stalin allowed him to remain head of the Hungarian Party. It was Gerő, however, who had the closest ties to Stalin: for example, only he could phone Stalin directly.⁸ Gerő, Révai, Farkas, and Nagy were the first of the group to reach Hungary, and on November 5, 1944, they set up a Provisional Central Committee in Szeged.⁹ They were joined soon thereafter by the others from Moscow and by those Party members who had spent the war in Hungary and managed to survive. Prominent among the "local" Communists were Antal Apró, János Kádár, Gyula Kállai, Károly Kiss, and László Rajk. The long-term goals of the two groups were as different as their

7. For a comparison of the lives of the Muscovites, see Gyula Borbandi, "The Last of Hungary's Muscovites Dies," Radio Free Europe Research Report, August 30, 1983, p. 19.

8. Béla Király, interview with the author. See Appendix I for the text of the interview. The relationship of the various Soviet leaders toward the leading Hungarian figures is treated extensively in Chapter 2 of this study.

9. Molnár, A Short History of the Hungarian Communist Party, p. 43.

backgrounds, but in 1945 both shared the view that the first priority was to win the Party popular support. Accordingly, Party spokesmen in 1945 called for patriotism, reconstruction, and unity with other parties, and pledged repeatedly that unlike in 1919 there would be no Communist dictatorship.¹⁰ Communist officials sought out the leaders of the major democratic parties - the Smallholders' Party, the Peasant Party, and the Social Democratic Party - to pledge their cooperation.¹¹

While Communist spokesmen were pledging to operate within the mainstream of Hungarian opinion, the Communist Party was being built up at a frantic pace: by 1946, 700,000 Hungarians had joined the Party. According to an American intelligence officer stationed in Budapest at the time, the "great majority" of the Hungarians who joined the Party in 1945 were former rank-and-file members of the Hungarian Arrow Cross (Nazi) Party; as such, they were the most vulnerable to Communist threats of reprisals and so also the most amenable to "guarantees" of

10. Paul Ignatus, "The First Two Communist Takeovers of Hungary: 1919 and 1948," in The Anatomy of Communist Takeovers, ed. Thomas T. Hammond (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 392.

11. This according to a written statement of Ferenc Nagy (Chairman of the Smallholders' Party and from February 1946 to June 1947 Prime Minister of Hungary) submitted to a United States Congressional committee in 1954. Nagy added that the Communists were compelled to work with the other parties if only because "there were scores of cities and villages where they were unable to find a single Communist." See the "Statement of Mr. Nagy," in Congress, House, Select Committee on Communist Aggression, Investigation of Communist Takeover and Occupation of Hungary, 83rd Cong., 2nd Sess., August 1954, p. 93.

protection.¹² In the same vein, many common criminals came to the conclusion that joining the Communist Party might prove expedient.¹³ The single most important factor behind the growth of the Hungarian Party, however, was the support given the HCP by the Soviet military and secret police. Soviet Marshal Kliment E. Voroshilov, Chairman of the Allied Control Commission, was instrumental in ensuring that the Hungarian Communists obtained such diverse advantages as financial assistance, transportation and communication facilities, military muscle, and intelligence.

12. Christopher Felix [pseudonym for James McCargar], A Short Course in the Secret War (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co, 1963), p. 190. The cover McCargar used was that of a member of the US Military Delegation to the Allied Control Commission in Budapest.

For a list of some of the former Nazi officials who found top positions in Hungary's Communist apparatus, see Béla Fabian, "Hungary's and Rumania's Nazis-in-Red: Hitler's Graduates Staff Stalin's New Order," Commentary 11 (no. 5, May 1951).

It was in fact not at all that uncommon for people of less than proletarian credentials to obtain important positions within the East European Communist parties. General Bohimir Lomsky, for example, for many years Czechoslovakia's Minister of Defense, was known frequently to have placed the Communist troops which he commanded during the war on the worst part of the front, where most of them perished. But the watchdogs in the Czech Party and in the Soviet Main Political Administration knew that because of these self-incriminating troop deployments, Lomsky would be sure to toe the Party line. See the interview with Jan Sejna conducted by the Oral History Project of the International Security Studies Program, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University; July 1985, Washington, DC.

Following the Communist takeover in Hungary, the Hungarian Party built up its own Main Political Administration, responsible for the Communist indoctrination of the country's armed forces. Its director was Sándor Nógrády.

13. See the testimony of István Barankovics (leader of the Democratic People's Party in 1947), Select House Committee on Communist Aggression, Investigation of Communist Takeover and Occupation of Hungary, p. 176.

In November 1945 free elections were held in Hungary, in which many of the "Muscovites" expected that the Communist Party would fare very well. The Communists arranged that the countrywide elections would be preceded by the municipal elections in Budapest, where it was felt that they would have a natural advantage. In the city voting, however, it was the Smallholders' Party, led by Béla Kovács, Ferenc Nagy, and Zoltán Tildy, which received an absolute majority. Marshal Voroshilov thereupon tried to persuade the Smallholders to run on a joint ticket with the other parties in the national election, but he was unsuccessful.¹⁴ The Smallholders' Party again received over 50 percent of the vote, while the Communist Party polled only 17 percent. Although there has been speculation that Rákosi may have advised the Soviets to permit the elections,¹⁵ he in fact had been against the whole exercise, recognizing that there was no way the Hungarian Communist Party was going to come to power through peaceful means. Rákosi calmly accepted his party's

14. "Statement of Mr. Nagy," Select House Committee on Communist Aggression, Investigation of Communist Takeover and Occupation of Hungary, p. 97.

15. "Rákosi ... was anxious to demonstrate that Communist rule was not incompatible with a democratic system," Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 17. And it is true that many Western publications did herald the elections as a sign that the Soviets might tolerate democracy in Eastern Europe after all: "This election result would indicate that even in areas beyond Anglo-American control ... the peoples of Europe can be given a chance to choose their own officials honestly and openly," The Christian Science Monitor, October 9, 1945. Cited in Stephen D. Kertész, "The Methods of Communist Conquest: Hungary, 1944-1947," World Politics 3 (no. 1, October 1950): p. 40.

defeat and then asked Moscow for the "Green light" to take power by the means he felt best.¹⁶

By the normal practices of a parliamentary democracy, the Smallholders' absolute majority in the national elections should have entitled them to form the government on their own. In Soviet-occupied Hungary normal practices were set aside, however, as Marshal Voroshilov insisted that only a coalition government would be acceptable. The Communists demanded that they be given the Ministry of Interior (which includes the police), and the Smallholders, under pressure from the Soviet-dominated Allied Control Commission, were forced to yield. Imre Nagy was named Interior Minister, though within a short time László Rajk succeeded him. Prior to the post at Interior, Nagy had been Minister of Agriculture, which put him formally in charge of the Land Reform of 1945; in fact all the parties in the government coalition supported the Land Reform, but because Imre Nagy was Minister, the Communists were able to claim credit for it.

With the police under its control and incorporated into the newly formed secret police, and backed by the Soviet occupying forces,¹⁷ the Hungarian Communist Party launched its bid for

16. Julius Háry, Born 1900: Memoirs, trans. J. A. Underwood (La Salle, IL: Library Press, 1975), p. 283. Háry, one of Hungary's most distinguished playwrights, spent the war years in Moscow and was on close terms with most of the leading Hungarian Communists. The "Green light" which Rákosi was seeking was permission to make full use of the Hungarian secret police, and he got it.

17. The presence of thousands of Russian troops on Hungarian territory was more than just a "behind-the-scenes" or psychological advantage for the HCP. The completely undignified Red Army treatment of the civilian population

power. In their contribution to the world's political lexicon, Rákosi and his followers instituted the infamous "Salami tactics," whereby members of conservative, peasant, and Christian parties, then Social Democrats and other workers' representatives, and finally even thousands of Communists were successively "sliced off." The Smallholders' Party was the first to come under Communist fire, finding itself compelled to dismiss twenty members as "reactionaries" in March 1946. Through 1946 the Communists, with backing from Voroshilov and his successor, General Vladimir Sviridov, demanded and obtained the dismissals of various officials in the Ministry of Justice, the Hungarian National Bank, and other state institutions; arranged for the command of the country's border guards to be shifted to a Communist, General Pálffy-Osterreicher (Inspector General of the Hungarian Army and Chief of the powerful Katona Politikai - the political-military police set up in Hungary by the NKVD); brought about the disbanding of the Catholic Youth organization, the Hungarian Boy Scouts movement, and other non-Communist youth organizations; prevented peasant demonstrations in favor of the Smallholders; and arrested or deported almost anyone who tried to interfere.¹⁸ More sure of their strength by early 1947, the

after the war and periodic policy of seizing randomly hundreds or thousands of Hungarians at a time to be deported to the USSR caused Hungarians to live in terror of the occupying forces. See the comments of Endre Márton, interview with the author, Appendix M.

18. "Statement of Mr. Nagy," Select House Committee on Communist Aggression, Investigation of Communist Takeover and Occupation of Hungary, pp. 99-101.

Communists announced that they had uncovered a conspiracy against the state, led by the Secretary General of the Smallholders' Party, Béla Kovács. Communist Party Secretary Rákosi and Minister of the Interior Rajk sought Parliamentary approval to strip Kovács of his immunity in order that he could be arrested, but Parliament refused. Nevertheless, on February 25, 1947, Kovács was seized by Soviet agents and taken to the Soviet Union. In May the Soviets produced a document, allegedly drawn up by Kovács during his stay in the USSR, which implicated several leading Smallholder officials in the conspiracy, including Prime Minister Ferenc Nagy. The Prime Minister's young son was immediately kidnapped, and Nagy, who was visiting Switzerland at the time, was informed that he would see his son again only if he had the good sense not to return to Hungary.¹⁹

At the same time, Rákosi's intrigues succeeded in splitting the Social Democratic Party. The Party's nominal leader, Arpad Szakasits, and his followers cooperated with the Communists, while the prominent Socialists who stood up to Rákosi were taken out of the picture: Anna Kéthly was placed under house arrest and eventually imprisoned (as was Szakasits) and Antal Bán chose to leave the country for the West.²⁰ Six opposition parties,

19. Kertész, "The Methods of Communist Conquest: Hungary, 1944-1947," p. 45. See also Major-General O. P. Edgcumbe, "Hungary and Communism," Army Quarterly 58 (no. 1, April 1949): pp. 78-79. General Edgcumbe was the British Commissioner on the Allied Control Commission in Budapest from 1945 to 1947.

20. Ignotus, "The First Two Communist Takeovers of Hungary: 1919 and 1948," p. 396.

including the Independence Party and the Church-sponsored Democratic People's Party were now authorized by the (Soviet-run) Allied Control Commission, with the aim of diluting the popular support of the three major parties, the Smallholders, the Socialists, and the National Peasant Party. New elections were called for August 1947, in which the three major parties were grouped with the Communists in a coalition. Over one million voters were disenfranchised on dubious charges just before the election was held, and the election itself was wracked by blatant Communist fraud. But in the end, despite all its efforts to intimidate the Hungarian population, the HCP could claim only 22 percent of the vote, and the four parties advertized as coalition partners together polled only 60 percent. It is interesting to note that the Communist Party's own internal estimation of the true totals had the HCP winning only seven percent of the vote.²¹

Following the 1947 elections, the Communists moved to put an end to the charade, and in the next few months moved forcefully against their opposition. The delegates of the Hungarian Independence Party were attacked as fascists and deprived of their seats in Parliament, the leaders of the Democratic People's Party were browbeaten into cooperation or exile, and the Smallholder President of the Republic, Zoltán Tildy, was forced to resign. The Social Democratic Party was penetrated en masse by Communists and forced to expel anyone who dared stand up to the Party's pro-Communist leadership. On March 8, 1948 the

21. Felix [McCargar], A Short Course in the Secret War, p. 276.

Social Democratic Party formally decided to merge with the HCP, and voted itself out of existence. The Communist Party was renamed the "Hungarian Workers Party," completely fraudulent elections were held in May 1949 ratifying the Communists' monopoly of power, and in August 1949 Hungary was declared a "People's Republic."²²

Throughout this whole process, the organization which most directly enabled Rákosi and his band of supporters to succeed (aside from the Soviet army) was the secret police. The nucleus of the Hungarian secret police was set up in December 1944 by special units of the NKVD. Gábor Péter, a Soviet agent with many years of experience in espionage and terror, was selected to be the Chief. In 1945 Péter, with the rank of Lieutenant General, moved his headquarters to Budapest, where the secret police was christened the Allam-Védelmi Osztály (State Security Department) and known by its initials, the AVO.²³ Rákosi would later

22. Kertész, "The Methods of Communist Conquest: Hungary, 1944-1947," pp. 48-51. Even before the "People's Republic of Hungary" was formally proclaimed, state power had effectively come to rest in the hands of the Communists. In May 1949, for example, the Ministry of Agriculture was headed up by a Smallholder, István Csala, but the real power lay in the hands of Mihály Keresztes, Csala's Communist Deputy; as one official said of Csala, "In the Ministry his voice carried no more weight than that of the doorman." Béla Szász, Volunteers for the Gallows: Anatomy of a Show-Trial, trans. Kathleen Szász (London: Chatto & Windus, 1971), p. 3.

23. Fittingly, the building used as AVO headquarters, 60 Andrássy utca, had also been the headquarters - complete with torture facilities - for the Arrow Cross. In 1949 the AVO was renamed the Allam-Védelmi Hatóság (State Security Authority), or AVH, but in Hungary it was still widely known as the AVO. See Paul Ignatus, "The AVH: Symbol of Terror," Problems of Communism 6 (no. 5, September-October 1957): p. 19.

elaborate upon the importance with which the Communist Party viewed the AVO:

There was one position, the control of which was claimed by our party from the first minute, and in which the party was not inclined to consider any distribution of posts or appointments according to proportionate strength of the parties in the coalition: this was the State Security Authority. ... we held this organization firmly in our hands from the first day of its establishment, and we made sure that it remained a reliable and sharp weapon in the fight for the people's democracy.²⁴

In addition to being uncompromisingly ruthless, the AVO was designed so that its component Divisions would compete against each other. AVO behavior which on the surface might have seemed arbitrary or counter-productive was in reality the intelligence chiefs' means of simultaneously keeping all the AVO sections occupied and ensuring that the Hungarian population lived in constant terror. The following was the structure of the AVO in 1947:²⁵

Division One - Responsible for infiltrating Hungarian political parties and organizations. As with all the Divisions responsible for infiltration and domination, Division One specialized in bribery, blackmail, and intimidation as means of recruitment. Directed by Sándor Horváth, who had been trained in Moscow.

24. Address by Rákosi on February 29, 1952, Társadalmi Szemle (Social Review), March 1952. Reprinted in part in "Mátyás Rákosi on Bolshevik Strategy and Tactics," Problems of Communism 1 (no. 4, November 1952): p. 35.

25. The structural breakdown of the AVO is taken from the account of one of the American officers who worked against Hungarian intelligence. See Felix [McCargar], A Short Course in the Secret War, pp. 240-246. For a close look at the AVO, from its inception through the 1956 Revolution, see George Mikes, A Study in Infamy: The Operations of the Hungarian Secret Police (AVH) (London: Andre Deutsch, 1959).

- Division Two - Responsible for infiltrating all foreign missions in Hungary.
- Division Three - Responsible for infiltrating the Hungarian Churches.
- Division Four - Responsible for infiltrating the Hungarian youth organizations.
- Division Five - Responsible for infiltrating the circles and activities of former Hungarian aristocrats, army officers, and politicians.
- Division Six - Responsible for infiltrating the state apparatus (civil service, government ministries).
- Division Seven - Responsible for general surveillance and kidnapping (a service provided for the other Divisions and for the Russians). Headed by Gyula Princz, a former Hungarian Nazi.
- Division Eight - Ostensibly responsible for the hunting down of former Nazis, in fact involved in providing cover for the activities of the other Divisions.
- Division Nine - Responsible for maintaining secret files on the general population, for later use in blackmail or disinformation. Also responsible for arranging false identities for AVO agents and for wire-tapping.
- Division Ten - Responsible for official documentation, identity cards, and "legal" files on the population.
- Division Eleven - Like Division Eight, ostensibly involved with the hunting down of former Nazis, but in fact responsible for the securing of prisoners and for show trials.
- Division Twelve - Responsible for the apportioning of internal AVO supplies - apartments, cars, clothes, and luxuries - and for the disbursements of funds.²⁶

26. The AVO had many sources of income, including of course assistance from the NKVD and revenues from expropriated Hungarian property. One unusual source of funds, however, was the secret caches of hard currency, gold, and diamonds which the Nazis had taken from Hungary's Jews: Gábor Péter rewarded the former Arrow Cross officials who led him to the caches. AVO agents also made a handsome profit by stealing automobiles from the Western zones of Austria and smuggling them into Hungary. *Ibid.*, p. 238.

Division Thirteen - The Hungarian Passport Office. Also provided cover for other Divisions.

Division Fourteen - Internal AVO personnel department. Responsible for the security and surveillance of AVO officials.

Division Fifteen - Responsible for surveillance of all high state officials, often as "bodyguards" supposedly from the National Police.

Division Sixteen - AVO Sub-headquarters in Budapest. Responsible for informer networks within the capital.

Division One-A - Responsible for the informer networks outside of Budapest, encompassing nearly 80,000 Hungarians.

Throughout this period the Communist Party's "security overlord" was Mihály Farkas, a man known to be personally fond of the use of violence. As the Central Committee Secretary with responsibility for the secret police (as well as for the military), Farkas was Rákosi's closest partner in making the AVO into the Communists' primary means of seizing power.²⁷ Still, Gábor Péter's ties to Moscow gave Péter tremendous power in his own right, and under his control the AVH would play a central role in the campaign against leading Hungarian Communists beginning in 1949.

Communist Hungary, 1949-1956

Beginning in 1948, with Communist Parties firmly in power throughout Eastern Europe, the "People's Democracies" turned their attention to Yugoslavia, which had been expelled from the Cominform at Soviet insistence and was now to be made the target of a ferocious political offensive. Part of the campaign against

27. Borbandi, "The Last of Hungary's Muscovites Dies," p. 19.

Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito was to include the theatrical unmasking of "Yugoslav agents" in all the East European states.

In May 1949, László Rajk, Hungarian Foreign Minister and former Minister of the Interior, was unexpectedly arrested. With the exception of Deputy Secretary János Kádár, Rajk was probably the most prominent "local" Communist in Hungary, and Hungarians were shocked to read that he was charged with being a Western and Yugoslav agent. The arrests of hundreds of other Party officials followed, all of them charged with "participating in an imperialist Titoist conspiracy against the leaders of the Hungarian Communist Party."²⁸ Unlike Rákosi and the other members of the Hungarian leadership who had spent the war years in Moscow, Rajk had spent several years in the West - in 1937 he fought in the International Brigades in Spain under the alias László Firtos, from 1939 to 1941 he was interned in France, and in December 1944 he was taken prisoner by the Nazis and held in Germany.²⁹ This contact with "Western influence" was enough of a black mark to make Rajk vulnerable to Rákosi's need for a show trial star in 1949 (most of the officials arrested along with Rajk had also served in Spain or had spent time elsewhere in the West). Also, Rajk's striking features and youthful build contrasted too dangerously with Rákosi's unattractive appearance and wide unpopularity. Nevertheless, Rajk was not the only

28. Tamás Aczél and Tibor Méray, The Revolt of the Mind: A Case History of Intellectual Resistance Behind the Iron Curtain (New York: Praeger, 1959), p. 71.

29. Alfred Reisch, "László Rajk Remembered," Radio Free Europe Research Report, April 17, 1984, p. 3.

possible candidate for bearing the Party's attack: Rákosi, Péter, and the Soviet MVD chief in Eastern Europe, Lieutenant-General Fyodor Bielkin, gave careful thought to arresting Kádár (Rajk's successor as Interior Minister) or Imre Nagy instead.³⁰ Apparently Rákosi and Bielkin reached the conclusion that indicting Kádár would not be sufficiently dramatic, whereas arresting Nagy, like Rákosi a Muscovite, would reflect unfavorably upon the vigilance of Soviet counterintelligence. Moreover, Nagy seems to have had a high-ranking patron in the Kremlin, someone who would not have looked too kindly upon Nagy's arrest at the hands of the AVH.³¹

Instead of arresting Kádár (at least for the time being), Rákósi gave him the task of visiting Rajk in prison and persuading the former Interior Minister to confess to the trumped-up allegations against him. Rákosi told Kádár to promise Rajk that in exchange for his cooperation with the Party at the trial, he would be permitted exile in the Soviet Union after being found guilty. Kádár complied with Rákosi's order and then was shocked that Rajk was summarily executed at the end of the trial.³²

30. Szász, Volunteers for the Gallows, p. 159.

31. The reference here is to Georgi M. Malenkov, who had established an operationally important modus vivendi with MVD Chief Lavrenti Beria. For the role of Soviet officials in the campaign against Yugoslavia and the purges of Hungarian Communists, see Chapter 2.

32. Endre Márton, The Forbidden Sky (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1971), p. 258. Márton was a US-accredited journalist in Hungary, himself imprisoned for eighteen months. He aptly points out how Kádár's naiveté in taking

The trials of Rajk and his accomplices, from the initial arrests and interrogations under torture to the final sentencing, were closely managed by Soviet officials in Hungary (Soviet security personnel in Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany played the same role in the purges there). The arrests of many of the most prominent people in Hungary's officer corps, for example, were arranged at the behest of the Soviet military and intelligence "advisors" attached to Hungarian military units. Sufficient grounds for arrest (or execution) needed be no more than Russian allegations of questionable loyalty to the Soviet Union.³³ The trials themselves were modeled on the Soviet show trials of the 1930s, complete with druggings of the defendants and damning signed "confessions." Gyula Alapi, another Arrow Cross veteran, played Andrei Vyshinski's part as state prosecutor. In order to prevent witnesses from deviating from the scripts they had been forced under torture to learn, the

Rákosi at his word in the Rajk case bears close parallels to his readiness to accept Soviet guarantees of Imre Nagy's safety seven years later.

Kádár carried out the Party's instructions despite his own close friendship with Rajk (he was godfather to Rajk's son) and despite the qualms he must have felt at that point about his own future. But Kádár's career was characterized at every stage by his willingness to take whatever steps the Party required. For an interesting look into Kádár's role, see George Páloczi-Horváth (another of the many veterans of Rákosi's jails), "The Life and Times of János Kádár," The New Leader 40 (no. 14, April 8, 1957): pp. 17-18.

33. See for example the case of General Béla Király, Appendix I. George Heltai, one of Imre Nagy's closest associates, attributes responsibility for "the lion's share" of the arrests to Rákosi and not to the Soviets. See Heltai's interview with the author, Appendix F. For examination of a possible American role in bringing about the purges, see Chapter 3.

court proceedings were repeated several times. The defendants never knew which version was only a rehearsal and which was the real thing.

It is highly doubtful that either Rákosi or any other member of the Hungarian leadership believed their victims genuinely to be guilty of the charges made against them, a fact reflected in the large numbers of convicted "imperialist" or "Titoist" agents who were freed after 1953 or rehabilitated (in some cases posthumously) in 1956. Moreover, the very high number of top Party cadres among those arrested would seem to dispel the idea that disloyalty to State or Party was the issue. General Pálffy-Osterreicher, for example, had been the Inspector General of the Hungarian Army, an assignment that would have been impossible to secure without the complete confidence of the Hungarian Communist leadership and the Soviet commanders in Hungary.³⁴ On the other hand, thousands of non-Communists were arrested as well, ranging from hostile intellectuals, shopkeepers, and factory workers to Socialists like Arpad Szakasits and György Marosán who had collaborated with the regime.

34. As head of the Katona Politikai, Pálffy had been seen by Péter as one of his main rivals, and it was largely for that reason that Pálffy was arrested. Similarly, Péter arrested Endre Szébeni, Rajk's legal advisor while Minister of the Interior, because Szébeni had dared to suggest a reduction in the huge operating costs of the AVO. Ignóty, "The AVH: Symbol of Terror," p. 20. Just the same, Péter was only taking advantage of the political climate to turn against old enemies; although he added to the spiral of terror, he did not launch the campaign. Ultimate responsibility for the Purges stemmed from the competition for power among Stalin's deputies in Moscow and in Eastern Europe. See chapter 2.

Waves of arrests continued from 1950 through 1952, in time snaring Gábor Péter and many of his AVH underlings, as well as most of the remaining wartime "home" Communists - János Kádár, Gyula Kállai, Ferenc Donáth, Geza Losonczy, and others. Party members learned to live with the fear of a midnight knock at the door, while the population at large had become sullen and equally terrorized. Ernő Gerő, meanwhile, was put in charge of economic affairs, and in 1949, under his direction, the industrialization of Hungary was undertaken at breakneck speed (accelerated even more by Soviet demands during the Korean War for greater output from East European heavy industry). Mihály Farkas handled defense and security matters and József Révai oversaw all cultural and literary endeavors.³⁵ By 1952, in short, Rákosi - "Stalin's Best Hungarian Disciple," as he liked to be called - and the rest of the "foursome" from Moscow had attained unchallenged mastery within the Party and throughout the country.

Stalin's death in March 1953 marked the beginning of a series of events which resulted in the first serious challenge to Soviet control over Eastern Europe. Yugoslavia's successful defiance of Moscow had demonstrated the possibility of "National

35. Though a career apparatchik, Révai was reputed to have been quite well read, and it was said that at one point he had hoped to be a poet. However, even at an early age his best efforts at creativity were apparently overshadowed by "socialist realism," as in this refrain:

Die my father!
Die my mother!
And you, my first love - croak!

Needless to say, the arts did not flourish in Hungary under his domain. Háty, Born 1900, p. 274.

Roads to Communism" as early as 1948, but only with the passing of the Soviet dictator could potential reformers in the satellites even think about trying to emulate Belgrade. At the helm in Hungary, on the other hand, Rákosi and his associates were uncertain whether the new Soviet collective leadership under Premier Georgi Malenkov would demand changes in the way Hungary was being run. Interestingly, however, Stalin's death was greeted by the Hungarian "Stalinists" predominantly not with forebodings over their ability to maintain power but with immense relief. The "Doctors' Plot" in the Soviet Union had seemed to presage a new round of purges in the bloc, in which leading Jewish Communists were likely to be the victims. According to András Hegedüs (Hungarian Premier from April 1955 to October 1956), Rákosi, Gerö, Farkas, and Révai (all Jewish) were terrified by Stalin's "murderous anti-Semitism."³⁶ Confirming this account is Nikita Khrushchev's remark to the Yugoslavs at the height of the Hungarian Revolution that Stalin personally detested Rákosi and never trusted him;³⁷ and Imre Nagy once told George Heltai that Stalin used to speak of Rákosi as an English agent.³⁸

36. Hegedüs' comments were made to the French daily Le Quotidien de Paris. Cited in "Former Premier Hegedüs Tells his Life Story," Radio Free Europe Research Report, November 9, 1976, p. 5.

37. Veljko Micunovic, Moscow Diary, trans. David Floyd (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), p. 140.

38. For Heltai's comments, see Appendix F. Of course, Stalin used to accuse Voroshilov of being an English agent as well (and even prohibited him from attending Politburo meetings), but that did not prevent Voroshilov from getting important

One of the main reasons that Rákosi was nevertheless able to keep his position as First Secretary of the Hungarian Party was his unrivaled skill in always anticipating exactly what Stalin was thinking, and the case of the "Doctors' Plot" was no exception. With the arrest of Rudolf Slánsky in Czechoslovakia (November 1951) and the dismissal of Ana Pauker in Romania (July 1952), Rákosi seems to have sensed that Stalin was moving toward a new round of purges, this time of a distinctly anti-Semitic nature. In order to save himself Rákosi proceeded to launch a brutal campaign against his own Jewish subordinates. The "Hungarian Doctors' Plot" came to include hundreds of leading Jewish figures from throughout Hungary, many of whom had no connection whatsoever with Party affairs. Moreover, it was in the belief that Stalin was about to arrest Soviet MVD Chief Lavrenti Beria that Rákosi ordered the arrest of AVO Chief Péter and his top lieutenants.³⁹ It remains an open question whether Rákosi's repressive measures would have saved him from Slánsky's fate, had Stalin lived much longer.

assignments. Stalin allegedly once wondered, "How did Veroshilov worm his way into the Bureau?" and Khrushchev told him, "You appointed him yourself." Nikita S. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, trans. Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1970), p. 308.

39. Paul Lendvai, Anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe (London: MacDonald, 1971), pp. 311-312. Lendvai, a former Social Democrat, was one of the Hungarians arrested in the purge of 1952. József Kóvago, yet another one-time resident of Hungary's prisons, was in a nearby cell when Péter was brought in, shouting "Remember who I was, the head of the secret police. I order every AVO man to obey me." He was gagged and taken away. Kóvago, You Are All Alone (New York: Praeger, 1959), p. 111.

From 1953 to 1957 events in Hungary, as in the other states of Eastern Europe, were directly influenced by the struggle for power among Malenkov, Khrushchev, and Vyacheslav M. Molotov in the Kremlin. When Malenkov was forced to relinquish the position of CPSU General Secretary in favor of Khrushchev (whom few took seriously enough at the time), in effect splitting the roles of Head of Government and Head of the Party, Rákosi was required to follow suit and cede the Premiership to Imre Nagy. Malenkov still remained the strongest figure in the Soviet Politburo,⁴⁰ however, and the word went out that his call for greater concentration on light industry and consumer goods within the Soviet Union was to be duplicated in Eastern Europe by a "New Course" promising economic relaxation.

Nowhere was the New Course put into practice more quickly than in Hungary, where Imre Nagy became its architect. At a meeting in June 1953 of the Soviet and Hungarian Party leaders, Khrushchev and Anastas Mikoyan joined Malenkov in castigating Hungary's economic performance and insisted that economic reforms take place.⁴¹ On the other hand, beyond making Imre Nagy

40. In 1952 the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee was renamed the Presidium, a move that had no real significance other than as an annoyance to Western analysts. I am using the term "Politburo" in this paper.

41. Mikoyan labeled Rákosi's economic policies "adventurous," and on a later occasion Lazar M. Kaganovich added that Rákosi was trying to build socialism "too rapidly." See Imre Nagy, On Communism: In Defense Of The New Course (New York: Praeger, 1957), pp. 106-107. As two recent observers have put it, "The Hungarian Communist Party engineered the miracle of a total agricultural collapse of an overwhelmingly agrarian country - a catastrophe angrily admitted by their Soviet masters." Ferenc Fehér and Agnes Heller, Hungary Revisited:

Premier, no major political changes were required. Rákosi was able to keep his position of First Secretary (which left him still in full control of the Hungarian Party apparatus), and during the next two years he did his best to sabotage Nagy's efforts to put the New Course into practice. Nagy found himself with the disadvantage not only of facing an openly hostile Party leadership (Nagy had only just a few weeks earlier been reinstated to the Politburo), but also of relying for support upon a steadily weakening faction in Moscow. Within the Hungarian State Ministries Nagy's position was no better: his accession to the Premiership had come as a surprise to all but a few top officials, and in the eyes of many Hungarians he was still tainted with allegations of Titoism.

Despite these obstacles, Nagy was able to shift much of the economic priority in Hungary to the production of consumer goods and away from heavy industry. Peasants were permitted, even encouraged, to leave the state collectives, with the result that food production in 1954 was double the rate of the year before. In addition, retail trade turnover rose by 25% and retail sales of manufactured goods grew by even more.⁴² There was also a

The Message of a Revolution - A Quarter of a Century After (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), p. 110.

According to Miklós Vászárhelyi, the director of Imre Nagy's information office (1954-55) and one of Nagy's closest advisors in 1956, Khrushchev sided completely with Malenkov in backing Nagy during the 1953 Soviet-Hungarian talks. See Vászárhelyi's interview with the author, Appendix R.

42. See "The Background of Hungary's Revolt," Soviet Survey 11 (1957). Reprinted in Walter Z. Laqueur and George Lichtheim, eds., The Soviet Cultural Scene, 1956-57 (New York: Praeger, 1958), p. 285.

marked relaxation in political terror, as Nagy's regime took steps to curtail the power of the AVH. Arrests on a massive scale came to an end, and prisoners' conditions began to improve. By 1955 many of the prisoners had been released. But Rákosi and his supporters never ceased trying to undermine Nagy's position, both in Hungary and with the Kremlin. In May 1954 Rákosi and Nagy returned to Moscow, each looking to have the other stifled, and it was again Nagy who prevailed. Nagy describes the situation:

Rákosi ... wanted to go to Moscow without me. The Soviet comrades felt this would be wrong and refused to give him permission. Thus Rákosi's attempts ... were a fiasco. He was obliged to admit both in Moscow and before the Political Committee [the Hungarian Politburo] that he had made the Political Committee accept a resolution containing unfounded and misleading statements concerning collective leadership, unity of principle, and Party democracy, and that he had informed the Soviet comrades in this vein.⁴³

For the time being Malenkov was strong enough to speak up for Nagy, while as in June 1953 Khrushchev supported Malenkov against Rákosi.

In February 1955, however, the balance of power in the Kremlin shifted, and Malenkov was forced to resign as Soviet Premier; Khrushchev, along with Bulganin, now appeared to have won the upper hand. Imre Nagy's decline followed. In March Nagy's economic policies were condemned by the Hungarian Party's Central Committee as a "rightist deviation," in April Nagy was

43. Imre Nagy, On Communism, p. 282. On Communism was a series of essays which Nagy wrote while out of power in late 1955 and early 1956. It was not published in the West until 1957 and has never appeared in Hungary.

deposed as Premier and dropped from the Politburo, and in November he was finally ousted from the Party altogether.⁴⁴ Still, it was Nagy's reliance upon Malenkov for support and not his policies per se which had brought about his downfall, since, as will be seen, once securely in control in Moscow, Khrushchev picked up the banner of the fallen and pursued his own "New Course" in Eastern Europe.

On the other hand, Nagy was not arrested, as before 1953 he certainly would have been, following such an open challenge to Rákosi. To be sure, Nagy's supporters were removed from office and his policies were overturned, but Nagy himself was free to move about and was popularly acclaimed. Rákosi interpreted his victory over Nagy as a license to return to the pre-1953 heavy industrialization efforts. His "neo-Stalinism" soon prompted widespread resentment and the beginnings of ferment. Hegedüs replaced Nagy as Premier (Rákosi was not permitted to do away with this formal separation of offices) but was careful to accommodate Rákosi. While Nagy wrote his On Communism, arguing for more sensible economic policies (and therefore for his reinstatement as Premier), Rákosi managed to alienate intellectuals and workers alike by his blind insistence on restoring the overbearing state domination of the arts and the impossible production quotas which had characterized Stalin's day, measures which were popularly thought to have been permanently discarded. Late in 1955 a harsh letter denouncing

44. Imre Kovács, Facts About Hungary (New York: Hungarian Committee, 1957), p. 76.

the regime's cultural policies was sent to the Politburo, signed by most of Hungary's prominent Communist authors. In subsequent weeks articles critical of the government began to appear in the organ of the Writers' Association, Irodalmi Ujság (Literary Gazette).

At the same time, many rehabilitated Party cadres and functionaries began to be released from prison, with tales of torture that horrified listeners (and it seemed as though nearly everyone in Hungary knew somebody who had been in prison). It is significant that Rákosi was not able to prevent Hungary's jails from being opened, reflecting the fact that the effort to eliminate AVH terror had gone too far for him to reverse completely. Rákosi should have seen in this a warning flag against pushing too hard in other areas. He might have recognized that without the full power of the secret police the Party was never going to be able to resume its intimidating posture of 1949 to 1953, but he didn't. De Tocqueville once wrote that the most difficult task for any tyrant is to relax his grip over the population and then try to restore control, and Rákosi was coming face to face with that reality.⁴⁵ Rákosi was a wily survivor, though, and he might well have found a way to reassert the absolute power he had once known, had Nikita S. Khrushchev not delivered his famous condemnation of Stalin at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU in February 1956.

45. For a close look at the dynamics of the 1953 to 1956 period, see Paul E. Zinner, Revolution in Hungary (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962).

Khrushchev had already made life uneasy for Rákosi by visiting Tito in Belgrade in May 1955, in dramatic fashion putting an end to the (first) Soviet-Yugoslav rift.⁴⁶ But by blasting Stalin as a poor strategist and an arbitrary murderer (conveniently overlooking his own role in the Purges of the 1930s), Khrushchev did more to undo the Soviet hold on Eastern Europe than any accommodation with the Yugoslavs by itself could ever have done. In destroying forever the myth of Stalin's infallibility, Khrushchev undercut not only all of Stalin's "Best Disciples" in the satellites, but the credibility of the Soviet leadership as well. The combination of the rapprochement with Yugoslavia and the denunciation of Stalin shook the foundations of Soviet rule everywhere in Eastern Europe, but particularly in Poland and Hungary, where Boleslaw Bierut and Rákosi - the two most prominent "satraps in the satellites" - found their regimes newly discredited in the eyes of their people.⁴⁷

Intellectual dissent spread in Hungary, as writers began to challenge the regime more boldly and with increasing frequency. They were joined by Party functionaries who were opposed to Rákosi, by university students, and eventually by average workers as well. To provide a "safety valve" for the disgruntled intellectuals, the Party had set up the Petöfi Circle (named after one of the heroes of the 1848 revolt), in which writers

46. See Chapter 2.

47. Adam Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1973 (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1974), p. 563.

could openly discuss literary themes. Soon after its formation, however, the Petöfi group began to consider such non-theoretical topics as the show trials of 1949-1952, the execution of Rajk and others, and the role of the secret police in Hungary. The climate fostered by the Petöfi Circle proved contagious: at a Party meeting of the editorial board of Magyar Nemzet (Hungarian Nation), Miklós Gimes, a staff member at Szabad Nép (Free People, the Party's official daily organ) who in earlier days had been the top assistant to Révai, responded to the publication of Khrushchev's "Secret speech" by asking whether Rajk and his "accomplices" would be rehabilitated, since Khrushchev himself had now shown that there had never been any "Titoist" conspiracy in the first place. In the weeks that followed, many others echoed his question.⁴⁸ And even as this dissent continued in Hungary from the spring into the summer of 1956, tension in Poland exploded into riots at Poznan.

However, there was little guidance from Moscow to the Hungarian leadership on how to proceed. Rákosi, facing the type of dilemma that De Tocqueville had predicted, swayed from concession to repression in an effort to maintain control: he ordered the dismantling of the minefields and the barbed wire along the border with Austria (euphemistically called "defense installations") and publicly admitted past "crimes," but then demanded the arrest of dissident writers and the imprisonment of Imre Nagy. It was widely rumored that the Politburo had drawn up

48. Aczél and Méray, The Revolt of the Mind, p. 334.

a list of four hundred leading figures to be arrested, but no such purge was ever launched. Instead, the Party announced the rehabilitation of László Rajk and others convicted in 1949; the account in Szabad Nép blamed Beria and Péter for the "provocation."⁴⁹ Rákosi attended several of the meetings of the Petöfi Circle in an effort to defend himself but was finally asked bluntly, "Comrade Rákosi, why don't you relinquish your post? Can't you see that nobody wants you?"⁵⁰

Many of the advocates of the New Course who had been dismissed in 1955 and a number of the dissatisfied intellectuals began coming together in early 1956 to form an informal group around Imre Nagy. The existence of the group was no secret in Hungary, and with time their views became widely known. It was almost as though a quasi-legal "opposition" to the regime had been established, seemingly beyond Rákosi's control. In Béla Király's words:

It was a time of fermentation in Hungary, and a certain amount of liberalization had already been accepted; the very fact that Imre Nagy and his friends could hold meetings was a sign that the regime was already no longer Stalinist. Nevertheless there still were always secret police just around the corner, watching what was going on.⁵¹

49. Szász, Volunteers for the Gallows, p. 228.

50. Márton, The Forbidden Sky, pp. 99-102. The questioner was not punished. For more on the dismantling of the minefields, see the account of William Stearman, an officer in the American Embassy in Vienna in 1956. Stearman's interview with the author is in Appendix P.

51. Király's interview with the author, Appendix I. Király was "recruited" by the Nagy group upon his release from prison and encouraged to reenter the army. Imre Nagy hoped to place

Nagy traveled freely around Budapest, where he was widely greeted with support. The account of one of Nagy's neighbors is typical: "I remember him doing something shocking for a leading Communist. He got on a bus, dipped his hand into his pocket, fished out a florin, and actually bought a ticket!" An old woman on the bus came up to Nagy and said "God bless you, when are you coming back? We just can't stand that Rákosi any longer!"⁵² By June 1956 it had become clear that Mátyás Rákosi had lost whatever legitimacy he had ever enjoyed. Moreover, instead of living in constant dread of the AVH, Hungarians of all backgrounds were now making scathing jokes at Party expense, and there is no surer sign that a regime is in trouble than that.⁵³

Within the Hungarian Party, opposition to Rákosi had grown steadily, and speculation on an alternative began to focus on former Deputy First Secretary János Kádár, who had been released from prison in August 1954 under the Nagy Premiership and had become Party secretary of Budapest's industrial 13th district. Rákosi, seeing in Kádár a rising opponent (although Kádár had never endorsed the regime's detractors), tried to destroy Kádár by pinning the blame for the Rajk trials - now declared by the Party to have been a "provocation" - on him. At a meeting of the

supporters in all state and Party institutions, with the exception of the AVH, which he hoped to be able to abolish.

52. Gyula Háy on Swiss television, June 17, 1968. Cited in David Irving, Uprising! (Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981), pp. 167-168.

53. "Rákosi's screams were no longer frightening," wrote Aczél and Méray, "They were a sign of nervousness instead of self-assurance." The Revolt of the Mind, p. 337.

Central Committee, Rákosi played a sensational tape-recording from 1949, in which Kádár could be heard trying to persuade Rajk, in prison, to accept the charges against him. But when skeptical listeners in the stunned Central Committee audience demanded to hear the whole tape from the start, Kádár was heard to begin by saying to Rajk how he was coming only at the behest of Rákosi.⁵⁴ Soon after, the Kremlin finally decided that Rákosi had to go, and dispatched Mikoyan to Hungary to inform the Central Committee of the Hungarian Party, which was still in session. On July 18, 1956, Rákosi was relieved, but not before he telephoned Moscow to demand confirmation of the news from Khrushchev himself.⁵⁵ Rákosi was flown to the Soviet Union, where he lived until his death in 1971.

Rákosi was replaced not by a New Course advocate such as Nagy or a "Home" Communist such as Kádár but by Ernő Gerő, Rákosi's counter-ego, a Muscovite with a long background in the Comintern. Not surprisingly, then, it soon became clear, that Gerő was as unable as Rákosi to stem the slide into revolt which had been underway for months, and Party authority continued to deteriorate. Suddenly desperate to provide the Hungarian Party with a greater measure of credibility, the Soviet leadership in early September invited Gerő and his associates to visit the Soviet Union, where Tito was "coincidentally" vacationing. Tito and his entourage had been on a hunt with their Soviet hosts when

54. Márton, The Forbidden Sky, pp. 103-104. See also Szász, Volunteers for the Gallows, p. 147.

55. Zinner, Revolution in Hungary, p. 214.

out of nowhere the Hungarian leadership suddenly materialized, much to Tito's displeasure. The Yugoslav delegation had had "not the slightest hint" that Gerő was in the Crimea and were now made to appear as though they endorsed the Gerő regime.⁵⁶ More importantly, Khrushchev was able to prevail upon Tito to host Gerő for a state visit in Yugoslavia.

Gerő arrived in Yugoslavia with an enormous delegation on October 15. He did not return to Hungary until October 23, despite the fact that in his absence from the country (and to some extent because of it), the Party's position in Budapest had continued to deteriorate. One can only wonder what kind of leader would spend the better part of two months outside his country while all state authority collapses at home (Gerő was in the Soviet Union from September 8 to October 7).⁵⁷ On October 6 Rajk was publicly reinterred, along with General Pálffy and other victims of the Stalinist purges in Hungary.⁵⁸ Following the burial ceremony a mass procession marched through Budapest, and

56. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, p. 116.

57. "They were fools," Miklós Vásárhelyi told the author, "They had no idea how serious the situation in Hungary really was. It just goes to show how far these apparatchiks were removed from the way people felt." See Appendix R.

58. It is not even certain that the coffin in fact contained the remains of Rajk. His widow said only "they showed me a box of human bones." Seymour Friedin, The Forgotten People (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962), p. 223. Another account contends that in order to find Rajk's remains it had been necessary to fetch Gábor Péter from prison, because only he knew where Rajk and his associates had been buried. See Péter Gosztony, "The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 Viewed from Two Decades' Distance," Canadian-American Review of Hungarian Studies 3 (no. 2, Fall 1976): p. 143.

the police did nothing to halt it. A few days later Mihály Farkas, Rákosi's partner in directing the AVH, was arrested along with his son, and shortly thereafter Imre Nagy was restored to Party membership. The situation had become so fluid that any incident could have set off confrontation and violence. But Gerő remained in Yugoslavia.

Meanwhile events in Poland had come to a head. Following the Poznan riots, the unexpected death of Party leader Bierut raised the possibility that the Polish regime might be unable to control the course of events. Edward Ochab, the new Party leader, managed for a while to hold together the competing wings of the Party, but gave way in October to maverick former First Secretary Wladislaw Gomulka. On October 19 Khrushchev arrived uninvited in Warsaw with half of the Soviet Politburo and sought to oust Gomulka. Facing a resolute Polish leadership, however, and aware that the Polish army and populace were prepared to oppose any Soviet intervention, Khrushchev reversed course and endorsed Gomulka and his policies. Khrushchev's gamble proved wise when Gomulka was successful in keeping a lid on Poland's turmoil, but the Poles' success in defying the Kremlin and in instituting reforms was watched closely in Budapest, where many Hungarians concluded that perhaps anything was possible.

The Hungarian Revolution

The Hungarian Revolution, or at least its culminating phase, is generally considered to have begun on October 23, 1956. In the afternoon, thousands of students, workers, and soldiers

marched as a gesture of solidarity with the Poles to the statue of General Bem, the Polish leader who had fought for the Hungarians in 1848. Speakers demanded the return to power of Imre Nagy, along with other political and economic reforms (such as the formation of a Popular Front government and the open disclosure of the true state of the economy), whereupon the crowd turned and marched to the Parliament building. There, Nagy addressed the gathering, which had swelled to over 200,000.⁵⁹ Gerő finally hastened home from Yugoslavia, and now made a radio address in which he repeated the standard Stalinist themes and made no concessions to popular demands. This only enraged the demonstrators, who moved against institutions of the regime throughout the capital. One group besieged the headquarters of the national radio, which was guarded by AVH detachments. Students insisted that their demands be read over the airwaves, but were rebuffed. When they tried to force their way in, shooting broke out and an all-out struggle began. A delegation from the (Party) Writers Union went to visit Gerő, telling him that the demonstrations were too large to be stopped. They suggested the Party therefore endorse the movement and place some top official, even Gerő himself, in the forefront. Gerő refused. The writers then asked if Gerő at least could promise not to fire

59. Nagy had not anticipated the scope of the demonstrations and had not had a speech prepared. When he began by saying, "Comrades!" he was immediately hooted down. See the comments of Gáza Katona, an officer of the US Legation who was at the edge of the crowd while Nagy spoke; interview with the author, Appendix H.

on the crowds, and this he did.⁶⁰ But that same evening the AVH opened fire on the demonstrators.

Late in the night the leadership of the Hungarian Party met in emergency session. The decision was finally taken that Imre Nagy should replace Hegedűs as Premier and that other reformers should be brought into the leadership.⁶¹ Nagy, Ferenc Donáth, Geza Losonczy, György Lukács, and Ferenc Münnich were added to the Central Committee, while Nagy and three of his supporters (Sándor Gáspár, József Kőböl, and Zoltán Szántó), along with Gyula Kállai (one of Kádár's group), were selected to the Politburo; but Gerő remained First Secretary, and Donáth was the only member of Nagy's group to be named to the important Party Secretariat.⁶² Gerő and his supporters hoped that they would be able to use Nagy to put a lid on the demonstrations and then, once the trouble was over, to cast him aside, as in 1955. Even in the meantime, though, real power - control over the Party and State apparatus - would remain in their hands.

At some point during the night, an appeal was issued by the Party leadership to the Soviet forces in Hungary to help suppress

60. With the promise, Gerő turned to Gyula Háy, the head of the delegation, and shook his hand - in Háy's words "a manly, reassuring handshake." Háy, Born 1900, p. 313.

61. According to Miklós Vásárhelyi, even Gerő and Hegedűs agreed that it would be necessary to bring in Nagy if the Party was to have any chance of keeping events under control. What is more, Vásárhelyi claims that Gerő phoned Khrushchev three times during the night, imploring him to approve Nagy as Premier, before Khrushchev would agree. See Appendix R.

62. Ferenc A. Váli, Rift and Revolt in Hungary (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), pp. 281-282.

the revolt, and by dawn Russian tanks were in the streets of Budapest. There have been several accounts of just who issued this decisive request, which cost the Party whatever credibility it still had. According to Brzezinski, György Marosán, a former Social Democrat only recently released from prison, was responsible for the request, although he issued it in the name of the Politburo.⁶³ But others have pointed out that whereas Gerő or Hegedűs had the authority to call upon the Soviets, Marosán was only a low-level functionary. One credible possibility put forward has been that Hegedűs, about to be stripped of his post, deserved the dubious distinction.⁶⁴

There has also been speculation that Soviet officials made the decision to give the Hungarian regime military assistance on their own initiative, without a request from any top Hungarian figure.⁶⁵ In 1979, to cite an episode with certain similarities, the Soviet leadership claimed that the USSR had been "invited" into Afghanistan, though this was pure fiction; in fact the Afghans allegedly extending the invitation didn't survive their guest's visit. However, there is an important difference in the two cases: in 1956, events in Hungary caught the Soviets by

63. Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc, p. 228.

64. Noel Barber, Seven Days of Freedom: The Hungarian Uprising, 1956 (New York: Stein and Day, 1974), p. 43. See also the account of Endre Márton, who stresses that Marosán was never persona grata with the Soviets. Appendix M.

65. See the section, "Was an invitation actually extended?" in United Nations, General Assembly Official Records, Report of the Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary, 11th sess., Supplement No. 18 (A/3592), 1957, pp. 95-97.

surprise and initially unprepared to mount an effective intervention, whereas in 1979 the Soviets had many months to prepare their assault and could supply any pretext for launching it.⁶⁶ What would appear likeliest is that at this point the Soviets still hoped that the Hungarians could handle the trouble themselves. Only upon receiving a plea for help from the Hungarian leadership did the Soviet forces enter the fray. It now seems certain that Gerő, a lifelong servant of Moscow who a few years earlier had had no qualms about sending thousands of Hungarians to their deaths, panicked and called his Russian overlords for help.⁶⁷ Gerő then followed up his call to the Soviets with a campaign to portray Imre Nagy as the culprit, an effort which the Stalinists (who still dominated the Party leadership) kept up even after Gerő had been removed. Nagy, however, steadfastly refused to attach his signature to any documents purportedly calling upon the Soviets to intervene, and in the end it was Hegedüs who signed a phony statement and antedated it by two days.⁶⁸

66. See Chapter 5.

67. Charles Gati, "Imre Nagy & Moscow, 1953-56," Problems of Communism 25 (May-June 1986): p. 41. Citing Hegedüs' memoirs, Elet Egy Eszme Arnyékában (Life in the Shadow of an Ideal), published in 1985, so far in Hungarian only), Gati claims that Gerő arranged "in consultation with [Soviet Ambassador Yuri] Andropov" for the Soviet troops to come to the regime's assistance.

68. Ibid. Apparently Andropov insisted on getting something in writing. Gerő and Hegedüs delayed complying, hoping Nagy could be made to sign.

Early on the morning of October 24 the changes in the Hungarian leadership were officially announced, and the impression was intentionally left with the public that it was Imre Nagy who had called in the Soviet forces. What was not revealed was that Nagy had become practically a prisoner of the Party and was unable to move about or make any public pronouncements without tight supervision. At the same time, most of Nagy's longtime supporters were excluded from the Party's deliberations and were left in the dark about Nagy's fate. Gyula Háy felt that Nagy had made a tremendous mistake in agreeing to accept the Premiership:

I was and still am convinced that Imre Nagy, in going to the Parliament Building ... delivered himself up into the hands of his enemies. From that moment on, and for a long time, he was no longer free but spoke under direct coercion.⁶⁹

George Heltai and Nagy's daughter both tried to reach Nagy at Party headquarters, but they were unable to get through to him. They managed to speak briefly with Nagy's son-in-law, Ferenc Jánosi, who told them that he and Nagy were being held and couldn't talk.⁷⁰ Donáth, Losonczy, and Vásárhelyi were able to see Nagy on October 25, however, and they tried to convince him that he had made a mistake in accepting the Premiership and allowing the Party to speak in his name. To their surprise, Nagy dismissed them curtly.⁷¹ Meanwhile, fighting continued in the

69. Háy, Born 1900, p. 315.

70. See Heltai's interview with the author, Appendix F.

71. See Vásárhelyi's interview with the author, Appendix R. Unlike Háy and Heltai, Vásárhelyi did not believe that Nagy

capital and spread to Debrecen, Szeged, and elsewhere.

Sometime during the day on October 24 Soviet emissaries Mikoyan and Mikhail Suslov, uninvited and unexpected, appeared at Hungarian Party headquarters to assess the situation.⁷² Upon their arrival Mikoyan and Suslov wasted little time in blasting Gerő for his inept handling of the crisis, and they made it plain that in their view he should resign.⁷³ Nevertheless, the formal decision of whether to dismiss Gerő was left in the hands of the new Hungarian Central Committee.⁷⁴ Gerő would not comply, though, and did his best to resist the demand that he step down. Like Rákosi three months earlier, Gerő insisted on phoning Khrushchev himself, but his efforts to keep his post were unsuccessful. On October 25 János Kádár was officially named

was being held prisoner at all. He came away with the view that Nagy was in full control of what he was doing.

72. The exact time of their arrival has been a matter of some dispute, but the contention sometimes made that the pair did not arrive in Budapest until the afternoon of October 25 is surely incorrect. See for example, "A Chronology of the Hungarian Revolution," Radio Free Europe Research Report, October 20, 1981, p. 4. Mikoyan and Suslov must have arrived in Budapest well before the replacement of Gerő was announced, since only their insistence brought it about. Gerő's resignation was announced at 12:32 P.M. on October 25.
73. Many accounts of the Revolution maintain that Mikoyan and Suslov criticized Gerő chiefly for having called upon the Soviet forces to intervene, which, if true, would support the view expressed above that it was in fact Gerő who had issued the request. According to George Mikes, Mikoyan and Suslov also reprimanded General Tikhonov, allegedly Soviet Counterintelligence Chief in Hungary ("a man of much greater importance" than Andropov), for having agreed to Gerő's request. Mikes, The Hungarian Revolution (London: Andre Deutsch, 1957), pp. 86, 91.
74. This is a point stressed by George Heltai. See Appendix F.

First Secretary of the Hungarian Party.⁷⁵ Kádár, who had been imprisoned under Rákosi and tortured by the AVH, was known to be opposed to Gerő's group in the Party leadership. The Kremlin apparently had come to the conclusion that the only way to stabilize the situation on the ground in Hungary would be to turn power over to Kádár and Nagy, give them a full endorsement, and hope for the best.⁷⁶

Mikoyan and Suslov then met at length with Imre Nagy. According to George Heltai, only after this point did Nagy gain any freedom of action.⁷⁷ Nagy met with Mikoyan and Suslov alone, without any of his advisors; Jánosi escorted him into the meeting, but was then turned away. The Soviet emissaries seem to have told Nagy that all the trouble in Hungary had begun during his Premiership and that therefore it was his responsibility to find a way to restore order in the country.⁷⁸ Still, they were explicit in pledging the cooperation of the Soviet Union, and made it clear that they would support Nagy in his efforts. They promised, for example, that formal Soviet-Hungarian talks would

75. Váli, Rift and Revolt in Hungary, p. 284. Váli adds that it was not until the massacre at Parliament Square (see below) that Gerő was finally ousted. Vásárhelyi disagrees (Appendix R), claiming that Gerő resigned willingly as soon as the Soviet emissaries had made their position clear. On this issue I find Váli's account more likely.

76. For the perspectives of the various Soviet leaders, see Chapter 2.

77. Heltai, "International Aspects," in The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 in Retrospect, eds. Béla K. Király and Paul Jónás (Boulder, CO: East European Quarterly, 1977), p. 48.

78. Mikoyan and Suslov "were openly hostile," Heltai told the author. See Appendix F.

soon take place, and that Soviet military detachments "would immediately be transferred out of the country."⁷⁹

By October 25 skirmishes in Budapest appeared to have subsided, and Russian tank crews conversed with Hungarian students and insurgents. A number of Soviet tanks joined a growing procession that made its way to Parliament Square in the hope of calling forth Imre Nagy (he was still being held at Party headquarters, though). From the tops of surrounding buildings AVH snipers opened fire on the demonstrators, killing both Russians and Hungarians. Uncertain and panicky, the Russian tank crews wheeled around against the crowd as well as the snipers, in what became one of the worst massacres (and there were several) of the Revolution. At that point Kádár came over the radio as the new First Secretary and appealed for order, promising that negotiations with the Soviets to resolve the issues between the countries would take place. For his part, Nagy announced that Parliament would soon meet to look into ways to reorganize the government.

The following day, October 26, Mikoyan and Suslov left for Moscow,⁸⁰ taking Gerő and Hegedűs with them. Gerő would not

79. Heltai, "International Aspects," p. 50.

80. At least, that is the view taken in almost every account of the Hungarian Revolution. Váli's description is typical: "Mikoyan and Suslov rode to the airport [Ferihegy] ... and left Budapest, to report to the Soviet Presidium." Váli, Rift and Revolt in Hungary, p. 284. The authors of a very recent book, however, insist that Mikoyan and Suslov in fact never left Hungary at all:

Mikoyan and Suslov remained on the field of operations as emissaries or plenipotentiaries.

return to Hungary until 1960, while Hegedüs came back in September 1958; neither ever held a prominent position again. On the ground in Budapest, police chief Sándor Kopácsi organized his units into armed detachments and demanded that the AVH withdraw from Party headquarters. His gamble succeeded, and the remaining hold of the secret police over the city was broken. Meanwhile fighting continued throughout the country, and in Magyaróvár and elsewhere desperate AVH forces needlessly massacred unarmed demonstrators.⁸¹ Popular resentment against the secret police finally exploded, and across the length of the country AVH men were hunted down. Many of those apprehended were shot or lynched in the streets.⁸²

They did not return home, as was generally assumed by both participants in the event and later chroniclers, but rather remained at Vécse military airport, near Budapest, which was under exclusive Soviet administration and which became the improvised headquarters of all Soviet operations in Hungary.

Fehér and Heller, Hungary Revisited: The Message of a Revolution, p. 161. This is presented as "brand-new information," but unfortunately no source is given for the daring claim. If it is true, it might suggest an earlier and more effective Soviet determination to squelch the revolt in Hungary than previously has been thought. See Chapter 5 of this study for an analysis of the Soviet decision to intervene.

81. Endre Márton points out that the AVH was so confident in its own power, and so sure that its position would never be challenged, that it supplied its officers only with AVH papers, with no regular documentation. So without the ability to pass themselves off as ordinary citizens, AVH officials were forced to flee or fight. See Appendix M.
82. What was tragic (and in Moscow easily made into propaganda against the freedom fighters) was that many of the AVH men who were killed during the Revolution were not personally guilty of major crimes. The AVH officials most responsible

On October 27 the formation of a new government (Council of Ministers) was announced, with Béla Kovács and Zoltán Tildy of the old Smallholders Party included, as well as the well-known Communist philosopher György Lukács. Newspapers of the free press began to appear in Budapest, while radio broadcasts from Western Hungary indicated that most areas of importance had fallen to the insurgents. Rural leaders such as Attila Szigetti reflected the heady confidence of the Hungarian provinces in their demands that Imre Nagy not give in to the Russians. Nagy continued to call for order, and on the next day announced a cease-fire. He went on to say that an agreement had been reached by which Soviet forces would withdraw from Budapest, and pledged that the AVH would be disbanded. Russian units conspicuously remained in the capital, however, and AVH power was scattered but not destroyed. Nagy found himself confronted with contradictory demands from several quarters, and government steps which only one month before would have been considered major landmarks were now dismissed as insufficient. In the streets revolutionaries were shouting for an end to communist rule in Hungary, while Nagy was still thinking in terms of New Course reforms.⁸³

for the rampant violence and terror were either already in prison, such as Gábor Péter and Mihály Farkas, or had left Hungary in good time.

83. Nagy and his supporters had never imagined that the dissent and anger which had been building up in Hungary would so suddenly produce an all-out revolution. To the contrary, they had envisioned being able to achieve reforms in a steady process over several years. The pace of events in October 1956 ruined their plans. See Béla Király's comments, Appendix I.

As the power of the AVH disintegrated, revolutionary councils were hastily set up throughout the country. In many cases the provinces called for maximal changes - withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary, the establishment of a multiparty system with guaranteed rights, national neutrality, and the like. The insurgents in provincial Hungary could not be kept in line from Budapest: "At present we receive no instructions," the revolutionary council in Győr told visiting journalist Ernst Halperin, "we make demands."⁸⁴ But Nagy and his colleagues still had to grapple with Stalinist intrigue, and only narrowly averted a combined Soviet and Geröite assault on the revolution's barracks strongholds in the capital. Nagy got on the phone first with Soviet Ambassador Yuri Andropov and then with Khrushchev himself with word that he would resign if the attack took place. Khrushchev assured him not only that no attack would follow but that Mikoyan would be returning to Budapest with a written clarification of the Soviet position.⁸⁵

Aware that the domination of the Party's Central Committee by the Hungarian Stalinists had not been addressed, Nagy established an emergency committee to direct the operation of the Party (which at that point had in practice all but disintegrated - it controlled in fact little more than a few buildings and the

84. For Halperin's interview with the author, see Appendix E.

85. Barber, Seven Days of Freedom, pp. 115-116. Vásárhelyi, on the other hand, minimizes the chances of a coup or other attack on Nagy, since the Hungarian army was supporting the Revolution and the AVH had fled for their lives. See Appendix R.

telephone links to the Soviets). The emergency committee was to be headed by Kádár and would include, along with Nagy, Ferenc Münnich, Antal Apró, Károlyi Kiss, and Zoltán Szántó. Whether as Premier, Nagy had the right to reorganize the Party is doubtful, but the established rules were of little relevance once Party coherence had disappeared. Moreover, Kádár approved the change. In general, though, Nagy's difficulties stemmed not from seizing the initiative (as in this case) but from being unable to rise above competing factions and clamoring extremists. It was not until October 28, Heltai wrote, that "the Nagy government recognized as its own the demands of the insurgents."⁸⁶ On October 29 the government officially abolished the AVH.

Sometime during the afternoon of October 30, Mikoyan and Suslov returned to Budapest, as Khrushchev had told Nagy they would,⁸⁷ carrying with them a copy of a conciliatory article which would appear in Pravda the next day. The Pravda Declaration seemed to indicate that Moscow was ready to accept many of the principles of the Revolution. The article admitted "mistakes in the relations among socialist states" and hailed the uprising in Hungary as a "just and progressive movement of the

86. Heltai, "International Aspects," p. 49.

87. This is unless one believes Mikoyan and Suslov to have been in Hungary the whole time, as Fehér and Heller maintain (see above). I have no basis for confirming that view and am inclined not to accept it.

workers."⁸⁸ The Declaration even addressed the sensitive matter of Soviet troops in Hungary:

It is well known that, under the Warsaw Pact and under agreements between the governments, Soviet troops are stationed in the republics of Hungary and Romania. ... In order to insure the mutual security of the socialist countries, the Soviet government is prepared to review with the other socialist countries signing the Warsaw Pact the question of Soviet troops stationed on the territory of the above-mentioned countries. In doing so, the Soviet government proceeds from the principle that the stationing of troops of one member state of the Warsaw Pact on the territory of another state shall be by agreement of all the member states and only with the consent of the state on the territory of which, and on the demand of which, these troops are to be stationed.⁸⁹

Not surprisingly, the text was very well received by Imre Nagy and his colleagues in the leadership, and by the population as a whole when it was published on October 31. Foreign observers were equally impressed: Tito's ambassador to Moscow, Veljko Micunovic, wrote, "it could have been written by us Yugoslavs."⁹⁰

In their discussions with Imre Nagy, Mikoyan and Suslov were as upbeat and encouraging as the Pravda piece they had brought. The Soviet emissaries echoed the claim in the Declaration that the Kremlin was prepared to consider a withdrawal of its forces from Hungary, and agreed to set up negotiations with the Hungarians leading to such a withdrawal. Indeed, Soviet troops

88. "The Soviet '30 October Declaration,'" reprinted in Barber, Seven Days of Freedom, pp. 239-242.

89. Ibid., p. 241.

90. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, p. 130. Whether the Pravda article was printed in good faith, and whether Mikoyan and Suslov were sincere in their discussions with Nagy and his colleagues will be discussed at length in Chapter 5.

were already very visibly pulling out of Budapest, turning public buildings over to the new Hungarian National Guard. But Nagy had received reports of fresh Soviet troop movements into Hungary⁹¹ and was therefore skeptical of the rosy claims which his visitors from Moscow were now making. Earlier in the day, he had phoned Andropov at the Soviet Embassy and demanded an explanation, but all he had heard were lame excuses. Now, however, Mikoyan and Suslov somehow convinced Nagy that Moscow's commitment to negotiate the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary was genuine. Nagy met with George Heltai just after his meeting with the Soviet pair and told him that he felt the Russians were sincere.⁹² Apparently Mikoyan and Suslov had even gone so far as to assure Nagy that he was "the last hope for socialism in Hungary," and that he should do everything in his power to save the situation for socialism.⁹³ Still, despite what the Kremlin's emissaries pledged about a troop withdrawal, it was significant that "They made no commitment on Hungarian neutrality, implying that Hungary would in one form or another remain a member of the

91. The Hungarian General Staff reported to Nagy on October 30 that Soviet military units had crossed the Soviet-Hungarian frontier that day at Záhony. "It is possible," Nagy was told, "that these troops are merely advance units of a considerable military force." See Heltai, "International Aspects," p. 51.

92. Heltai's interview with the author, Appendix F. Following the dismissal of Imre Horváth, whom Nagy found too unreliable, Heltai for all intents and purposes became Hungarian Foreign Minister - although officially Nagy had reserved that title for himself and named Heltai his deputy.

93. This is what Ferenc Jánosi, Nagy's son-in-law, told Miklós Vásárhelyi of Nagy's meeting with the Russians. See Appendix R.

remodeled pact."⁹⁴ Nagy, meanwhile, recognizing the need to consolidate the forces of the Revolution, established a Revolutionary Home Defense Committee under General Béla Király, chairman, and Colonel Pál Maléter. Király assumed the titles of Supreme Commander of the National Guard and Military Commander of Budapest.

During the talks with Mikoyan and Suslov the subject of broadening the government to include non-Communist representatives came up. Nagy said that he felt the move would be necessary, which brought a long silence from the Soviet side. Finally Nagy was asked which parties would be involved, and he replied that only those parties which the Russians had approved in 1945 would be brought in. Mikoyan and Suslov then grudgingly gave their consent, so long as "the socialist character of the government" was not affected.⁹⁵ Accordingly, Nagy publicly announced the replacement of the one-party system with a return to the multiparty coalition of 1945. The composition of Ministers in the Cabinet was changed again, now including, in

94. Heltai, "International Aspects," p. 53. But there is no evidence that it had ever been Imre Nagy's intention to make Hungary into a neutral state. As a Marxist who had spent many years in Moscow, Nagy wanted Communism to succeed in Hungary and very much desired close ties with the Soviet Union. On November 1, when Nagy finally did declare Hungary neutral, it was only because a Soviet invasion was by then known to be imminent. See below.

95. Heltai, "International Aspects," p. 53, and interview with the author, Appendix F. Heltai adds that Mikoyan and Suslov still cautioned against going too far - certainly a highly relative concept. What the Hungarians were already doing would have been considered only one month earlier as "too far" and then some.

addition to Smallholders Kovács and Tildy, Ferenc Erdei of the old National Peasant Party. Nagy added that he was prepared to include Social Democrats as well.

At the same time, Budapest's central radio station was placed under the hands of the revolution and renamed Free Radio Kossuth, while in Felsőpetény in northern Hungary, Cardinal Mindszenty was freed from house arrest. Elsewhere, the city Party headquarters in Budapest was overrun by a frenzied revolutionary mob, and in a step which even the newly established free press decried, all of the surrendering Party and AVH officials were shot.⁹⁶ Factions within the government continued their bitter feuding that Nagy could not control, while representatives of the provinces and of many of the insurgents in Budapest demanded immediate withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact.

Early on October 31 the news reached the Hungarian government that British and French forces were attacking Egypt. Most of Nagy's officials immediately drew the conclusion that the West was now going to be distracted from the Hungarian cause, though as it was, the Western governments had been doing little to support Nagy in any tangible fashion. Moreover, the logical corollary was that the Soviet leadership would now find itself freer to act against Hungary.⁹⁷ The few optimistic members of

96. Among them was Imre Mező, Secretary of the city Party organization. In the opinion of János Radványi, later Hungary's Chief of Mission in Washington, it was this incident which turned the tide in Moscow against Nagy. See Radványi's interview with the author, Appendix N.

97. "God damn them!" Geza Losonczy is reported to have shouted when first told of the attack on Egypt. Barber, Seven Days

the week-old government hoped that the Suez operation was actually the opening shot of an assertive Western campaign against Soviet influence, one which would soon result in relentless Western pressure against Moscow to get out of Hungary. George Heltai expected the Suez crisis to result in a vigorous American effort to force the French and the British to evacuate Egypt, but Heltai believed that the US would not take this step (which was after all doing Moscow a big favor) without first receiving in return a Soviet pledge not to suppress the revolution in Hungary.⁹⁸ Imre Nagy himself hoped to negotiate a Soviet withdrawal from Hungary without having to turn to the United States for help.⁹⁹

In the political arenas beyond Parliament, the revival of the non-Communist Parties was continuing. The Smallholders Party

of Freedom, p. 145. Few would argue with Losonczy. "Suez was a stab in the back for us," Endre Márton told the author (Appendix M), expressing the widely shared view. Béla Király (Appendix I) agreed that it was the Suez crisis which diverted American attention away from Hungary.

98. The course which American policy then in fact took was a tremendous disappointment to everyone in Hungary who had expected Eisenhower's sternness with France and Britain to be matched by at least the same stamina against the USSR. "Khrushchev," Heltai said with some bitterness, "could never have expected to force the Western powers out of Egypt and at the same time to crush Hungary without getting into a war with the United States, and yet that is exactly what happened." See Heltai's interview with the author, Appendix F. For an analysis of the Eisenhower Administration's policy toward the Hungarian Revolution, see Chapter 4.
99. Indeed, one of the difficulties with the accusations leveled against Washington for failing to do more to support the Hungarians is that until November 1 the Nagy regime never asked the US for anything. Nevertheless, I find the conduct of the American government in the crisis to have been uniformly shortsighted. See Chapter 4.

reestablished their executive committee, and the Social Democratic Party was being successfully reorganized under the guidance of Anna Kéthly. Just as Mikoyan and Suslov had indicated, there seemed to be no objection from Moscow. On the contrary, Soviet troops proceeded in an orderly manner with their withdrawal from Budapest. But Maléter and others kept returning to Nagy with the infuriating information that Soviet armored units were still pouring into Hungary over the country's eastern frontiers. However, Nagy and his advisors decided not to publicize the news of the fresh Soviet military deployments into Hungary, in order to minimize the chances that any Hungarian units would launch a desperate attack against Soviet forces.¹⁰⁰ What Nagy was beginning to fear most was that Khrushchev would use some anti-Soviet incident as a pretext to scrap the negotiations and turn against Hungary with full force. Nagy continued to hope that the talks could lead to an agreement, but was becoming less confident. And when he phoned Andropov to find out why Soviet tanks had surrounded all of Hungary's major airports, he was assured that this was merely to facilitate the evacuation of Russian civilians. As nervousness spread within the government's councils, Mikoyan and Suslov took their leave of Nagy and returned to Moscow.

On the following day, November 1, Nagy met with Andropov twice in the morning, and the Ambassador repeated, most unconvincingly, that the ongoing Soviet troop movements were of

100. Heltai, "International Aspects," p. 52.

no consequence and that Moscow still stood by the October 30 Declaration in Pravda. Recognizing the obvious deception and fearing the worst, Nagy instructed Heltai to draft a statement officially declaring Hungary to be neutral, and at the afternoon meeting of the Cabinet, at which Andropov was present, the declaration was adopted. It is important to note that the Hungarian declaration of neutrality is not what caused the Soviet invasion three days later. The reverse is rather the case. Imre Nagy already had sure intelligence showing that a Soviet invasion was imminent, and he hoped that the dramatic step of withdrawing from the Warsaw Pact might give the Soviets cause to think twice before going ahead with their plans.¹⁰¹

At the same time, a formal note was wired to the United Nations requesting, for the first time, that the UN and the Four Powers take up the issue of Hungary. The text said, inter alia, the following:

The President of the Council of Ministers, in his capacity of Minister for Foreign Affairs, ... informed the Soviet Ambassador that the Hungarian Government immediately repudiates the Warsaw Treaty and, at the same time, declares Hungary's neutrality and turns to the United Nations and requests the help of the four great powers in defending the country's neutrality. ... Therefore I request Your Excellency promptly to put on

101. Béla Király (Appendix I) is explicit on this:

Imre Nagy tried to protest, and begged the Soviets to stop the whole thing, but the intervention had already been decided upon. The declaration of neutrality was an effort to dramatize for the whole world how absolutely illegal the Soviet intervention was. ... Without the evidence of the impending Soviet invasion, the official policy of the Hungarian government would not have been neutrality.

the agenda of the forthcoming General Assembly of the United Nations the question of Hungary's neutrality and the defense of this neutrality by the four great powers.¹⁰²

Similar message were also officially delivered to the missions of France, Britain, and the United States in Budapest (Andropov was given the formal note while at the Cabinet session at Parliament). As with the Hungarian communication to the UN, this was the first formal contact between the Nagy regime and the Western powers. Péter Mád, one of the Foreign Ministry's top officials, was briefed by Heltai to explain to the Western representatives the type of diplomatic support which Nagy desired from them. Mád then carried the written notes to the three Western Legations and explained the Hungarian position.¹⁰³

Without warning, however, Imre Nagy was suddenly facing trouble from an unexpected source. János Kádár, the First Secretary of the Communist Party and Chairman of the Party's emergency committee, had disappeared late in the day along with Ferenc Münnich. They were immediately suspected of having gone over to the Soviets, which took many of Nagy's officials by surprise, since that same day Kádár had vowed defiantly to

102. Reprinted in The Hungarian Revolution: The Story of the October Uprising as Recorded in Documents, Dispatches, Eye-Witness Accounts, and World-wide Reactions, ed. Melvin J. Lasky (New York: Praeger, 1957), pp. 184-185.

103. Heltai's interview with the author, Appendix F. It was a reflection of the Nagy regime's naive confidence that the West would take up its cause, that in the hours and days after this overture to the Western missions, there were no follow-up efforts on the part of the Hungarians to see whether the Americans and the others were going to take any steps in Hungary's defense.

Andropov that he would fight the Russians with his bare hands if they returned to Budapest. Moreover, Kádár had supported the declaration of neutrality.

On November 2, only after a second urgent request from Budapest, the United Nations Security Council took up the question of Hungary. Soviet delegate Arkady Sobolev denied all reports of Soviet troop movements in Hungary and demanded that discussion of the issue be dropped. After a few hours, the Council agreed to postpone all official debate on Hungary until at least November 5. The United States delegation did not object.¹⁰⁴ There was no further treatment of the Hungarian question in the United Nations until after the Soviet invasion.

In Budapest, Andropov phoned Nagy to tell him that a large mob of unruly revolutionary "hooligans" was besieging the Soviet embassy. Nagy, fearful that Moscow might use such a development as an excuse for intervention, hastily dispatched Király to the scene with a company of men and tanks. Király arrived promptly, but the square in front of the Soviet mission was deserted. Andropov made no effort to explain what had happened to the alleged hooligans, but instead tried to sound out Király on defecting to the Soviet side.¹⁰⁵ It is ironic that Andropov made

104. Bennet Kovrig, "Rolling Back Liberation: The United States and the Hungarian Revolution," in The First War Between Socialist States: The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and Its Impact, eds. Béla K. Király, Barbara Lotze, and Nándor F. Dreisziger (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1984), p. 284. For the American policy on Hungary in the United Nations, see Chapter 4.

105. Béla K. Király, "The Armed Forces and the Working Class in the Hungarian Revolution, 1956," New Politics 1 (no. 1,

the charge that his embassy was being besieged by hooligans, because the truth was that the Nagy regime was finally beginning to assert cohesive control over the revolution. For example, a Yugoslav correspondent in Budapest, Vlado Teslic, was able to note that "Hungary has made a great stride in the direction of relaxation."¹⁰⁶ There was no official Soviet response to Nagy's declaration of Hungarian neutrality and withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact.

The government was reorganized once again on November 3, with more non-Communists brought into the leadership. Cardinal Mindszenty addressed the nation in a long anticipated radio broadcast, and in a cautious tone stressed Hungary's special position in Europe. Negotiations on the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary finally opened at the Parliament building. The Soviet military team was led by General Mikhail Malinin, while the Hungarian delegation was headed by Ferenc Erdei, Minister without Portfolio, and included Pál Maléter (now with the rank of General), the newly named Minister of Defense. The talks appeared to be going well, as discussion focused not on whether or not the Soviet troops would withdraw from Hungary but

Summer 1986): pp. 196-197., and Király's interview with the author, Appendix I. Andropov's orders clearly must have been to recruit as many prominent members of the Nagy government as possible. No doubt it was hoped that the Soviet arguments which had been effective with Kádár would convince others as well. But with the exception of Kádár and Münnich, very few top officials abandoned Nagy.

106. The text of the Teslic article, (in the Yugoslav daily Borba), may be found in Lasky, The Hungarian Revolution, p. 187.

on the details of how they would withdraw - how to make the pullout honorable and efficient. When the Soviet side offered to host the evening round of talks at their headquarters at Tököl, on Csepel Island, the Hungarians accepted.¹⁰⁷ In the middle of the Tököl talks, however, the Chief of the Soviet KGB, Ivan Serov, suddenly appeared in the negotiating chamber, and Maléter was arrested.

In the early morning hours of November 4, Soviet forces attacked Budapest and other revolutionary strongholds throughout the country. All major roads, railroad lines, and airports were already in the Russians' hands, so that the invasion proved to be a matter only of crushing such resistance as was mounted in the cities. Nagy and his Ministers issued last-minute appeals to the world for support, and notified listeners that the legitimate government of Hungary was being assaulted in a scurrilous assault that defied international law. Then they fled, some with their

107. The problem still lingers how Imre Nagy could possibly have thought that the Soviet negotiation effort was sincere, since he had at his disposal overwhelming evidence that a massive Soviet military operation in Hungary was imminent (and on that basis had withdrawn Hungary from the Warsaw Pact). My view is that Nagy's belief in the talks can be explained by a desperate (and therefore not wholly rational) "hope against hope" that a solution might somehow be worked out, combined with an effective Soviet campaign to deceive Nagy and his supporters into thinking that Moscow might still decide not to intervene. Since General Malinin was able to convince Erdei and Maléter that he was sincere, the question that most needs to be answered is whether Malinin was himself aware of Moscow's true plans. Malinin was either expertly Machiavellian in manipulating his adversaries or intentionally misled by his own superiors. See Chapter 5.

families, to the Yugoslav Embassy for sanctuary.¹⁰⁸ Cardinal Mindszenty appealed for, and was granted, refuge in the United States Legation, while thousands of others fled across the Austrian frontier (reaching 200,000 or so by most estimates). János Kádár was soon heard on Hungarian radio, claiming to be in Szolnok in eastern Hungary and announcing the formation of a "Revolutionary Worker-Peasant Government" headed by himself and Ferenc Münnich.¹⁰⁹ Guarded around the clock by Soviet troops, Kádár was installed in Budapest, from where the orders for arrests, murders, and deportations went out under his name.

Military resistance to the Soviet forces was broken within a few days, as fighting units under General Király and others were forced to flee into western Hungary and then into Austria. Resistance in Hungary's biggest factories was not broken for months, while other non-violent opposition to the quisling Kádár regime lasted for years. On November 22, Imre Nagy and his supporters were released from the Yugoslav Embassy following negotiations between Belgrade and the Kádár regime which resulted in a Hungarian pledge that Nagy would not be arrested.¹¹⁰

108. For the role of the Yugoslavs in the Hungarian Revolution, see Chapter 5.

109. Zoltán Vas is reported to have claimed that Mátyás Rákosi himself also tried to set up a new government in Szolnok. See Irving, Uprising!, pp. 594-595. It may be true that several of Rákosi's supporters (such as Andor Berei and Erszébet Andics, Hungarian Stalinists who held Soviet passports) gathered in Szolnok and called upon Rákosi to return, but I do not believe that the Soviet leadership ever allowed Rákosi to set foot in Hungary. Khrushchev was putting Moscow's weight behind Kádár.

110. See Chapter 5 for details.

Despite the guarantee, however, Nagy and his colleagues were abducted by Soviet security personnel almost immediately upon leaving the Yugoslav compound, and were taken away to Romania. Eventually Nagy was secretly brought back to Budapest, where he was made to stand trial. This time there was no theatrical show, only a quiet and unpublicized murder: in June 1958 Nagy and Maléter were executed.¹¹¹ The thousands of revolutionaries who did not flee the country, and who were not deported to the Soviet Union, were urged by the new regime to return to work and resume their pre-1956 routines. Many were actually offered new jobs. Even Pál Maléter's widow was not overlooked; she was generously offered a special position - as a gravedigger.¹¹²

111. Three others of the group which had taken refuge with the Yugoslavs were put to death as well. Geza Losonczy was murdered in his cell in December 1957, József Szilágyi was killed in April 1958, and Miklós Gimes was executed along with Nagy and Maléter. See Sándor Kopácsi, In the Name of the Working Class: The Inside Story of the Hungarian Revolution, trans. Daniel and Judy Stoffman (New York: Grove Press, 1987), pp. 238-286. According to Kopácsi, the orchestration of the Nagy "trial" was entirely in Soviet hands, not Kádár's. The decision to execute Nagy was taken by Khrushchev himself, and Andropov and Serov collaborated in implementing Khrushchev's instructions. See also Tibor Méray, "The Trial of Imre Nagy," in Király and Jónás, The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 in Retrospect.

112. Háy, Born 1900, p. 346.

CHAPTER TWO:
SOVIET POLICY IN EASTERN EUROPE, 1944-1956

Establishing the Glacis

The means by which the Communists were able to win control in Hungary between 1944 and 1949 were repeated in roughly the same way in Romania, Bulgaria, and Poland, though the extent to which the Soviet army and secret police intervened, and the extent to which the local Communist Party could draw upon popular support, varied by country.¹¹³ In Yugoslavia, a partisan Communist movement led by Josip Broz Tito took power in the vacuum left by the withdrawal of the Germans, after winning an underground civil war against the Yugoslav royalists.¹¹⁴ The Albanian Communists, led by Enver Hoxha, came to power in similar fashion. In Czechoslovakia, the lone genuine democracy in Eastern Europe before World War II (or since), Communist control of the state was secured by a coup d'etat in February 1948, while in Soviet-occupied Germany a Communist regime was not officially established until 1949.

113. For a comparison of the several takeovers, see Hammond, The Anatomy of Communist Takeovers.

114. Tito's victory was made possible in part by British wartime support. See Chapter 3.

The consolidation of Communist control in each of these countries (with the exception of Yugoslavia and Albania) took place relatively slowly, required because of the widespread popular opposition to Communism and because Stalin was careful not to needlessly awaken the United States out of its apparently imminent return to isolationism.¹¹⁵ This caution was made all the more imperative by the American atomic monopoly. Of course, Stalin's territorial claims against Turkey, and reluctance to withdraw Soviet troops from Iran (both neutral in the war, though Iran was in practice occupied by the Allies) did lead to greater concern in Washington about Soviet intentions, a concern which eventually took form as the Truman Doctrine.¹¹⁶ Furthermore,

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115. In June 1944, for example, Stalin rebuked Milovan Djilas for the Yugoslav Partisans' outward identification with the Soviet Union:

The substance of [Stalin's] suggestions was ... that we ought not to "frighten" the English, by which he meant that we ought to avoid anything that might alarm them into thinking that a revolution was going on in Yugoslavia or an attempt at Communist control. "What do you want with red stars on your caps? ... By God, stars aren't necessary!" Stalin exclaimed angrily.

Milovan Djilas, Conversations with Stalin, trans. Michael B. Petrovich (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1962), p. 73. The allusion here is to the British, but by the end of the war Stalin was more concerned about the Americans, particularly given the strong state of the US economy (with an awesome heavy industrial production that Stalin could not possibly overlook). One reason that the semblance of free elections was maintained in Hungary even after the Communists had effectively seized control was precisely to try to persuade the Americans that things were not so bad.

116. The blockade of West Berlin in 1948 played a similar role in galvanizing the West into a unity which might otherwise have been more slow in developing, but by then the challenges to

some elements within the Soviet Communist Party were demanding a more assertive campaign against the West, for example calling for more tangible support to the Greek Communists.¹¹⁷ But since at a minimum neither Stalin nor anyone else in Moscow expected that Soviet-American relations would ever return to a level approaching the state of cooperation which had characterized the countries' wartime relations, it was taken by all in Moscow as a success of Soviet diplomacy and deception that Communist regimes had been foisted upon the peoples of Eastern Europe without provoking more of an American reaction.

Historians of the "Cold War" period (1945-1955 or so) differ in their views on whether the establishment of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe was preplanned in Moscow or enacted only as the international situation permitted.¹¹⁸ What is clear is that in August 1939, at the time of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, Stalin was already determined to bring Soviet rule to bear on eastern Poland and the Baltic states (Estonia and Latvia by the Secret Protocol of the Pact, Lithuania by a subsequent agreement with Hitler), and in 1940 Stalin annexed Bessarabia. Moreover, Bolshevik

the establishment of Communist power in the East European countries had been broken.

117. See the next section, The Impact of Factional Competition on Soviet Policy.
118. See, for example, Louis J. Halle, The Cold War as History (New York: Harper & Row, 1967); Vojtech Mastny, Russia's Road to the Cold War: Diplomacy, Warfare, and the Politics of Communism, 1941-1945 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978); Staughton Lind, "How The Cold War Began," in The Cold War: A Conflict of Ideology and Power, ed. Norman A. Graebner (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1976); Adam Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence.

armies had tried to overrun Poland as early as 1920, while Lenin had supported the effort of Béla Kun to establish a Soviet Republic in Hungary in 1919. And the fact that Communists from Germany, Hungary, and elsewhere in Eastern Europe spent World War II inside the Soviet Union, being readied for rule in their home countries following Red Army victories, strongly suggests that Stalin was hoping to bring "friendly" regimes to power even in areas which had never been part of the Tsarist empire. In this respect, the objective of Soviet policy was the establishment of a "glacis" in Eastern Europe, a vast territory cleared out of potential obstacles, which, like the plain surrounding a medieval castle, would afford the local lord the luxury of fighting his battles beyond his immediate doorstep.

Ideological motivations also played an important role in Soviet policy in this period. The successful establishment of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe was a landmark achievement in the history of Soviet policy, if for no other reason than that it marked an end to the Soviet Union's status as the world's only Communist state - an isolation which both Lenin and Trotsky had recognized was a long-range political threat to the survival of Bolshevism in power. While it was true that the postwar growth in the number of Communist regimes would now present the Soviet rulers with the problem of retaining control over the new Communist governments, it was also true that by 1947 the CPSU had already had nearly thirty years of experience in the art of dominating the "fraternal" Parties. The fact that several of those Parties were now to enjoy state power could be expected to

make Soviet control more difficult, but from the perspective of the Kremlin certainly not prohibitively so.¹¹⁹

If ideological or even imperialistic impulses are to be cited as the reasons for Moscow's push to bring to power Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, however, one must address the question of why Finland was spared from the process.¹²⁰ This omission would seem particularly puzzling, since not only was Finland a former Nazi ally but - unlike Hungary and Romania, German satellites which were treated extremely harshly following the war - Finland was also a former component of the Russian Empire, whose loss to the "Whites" in 1918 was a major blow to the Bolsheviks. Part of the reason for Stalin's decision to bypass Finland was no doubt his recollection of the fight which the Finns put up in 1939, but by 1944 the Finns could not

119. Although the ideological imperative of working to bring about Communist revolutions has always been a top priority of the Marxists who run the USSR, it nonetheless has taken a back seat to organizational and imperialistic dictates: the concern which has been overriding in Moscow has been the need to retain control over the international Communist movement. This at times has led Soviet leaders to take steps which have nearly destroyed foreign Communist Parties, as took place in 1927 when Stalin ordered the Chinese Party to come to an "accommodation" with Chiang Kai-shek. On other occasions, the interests of the Soviet state required that a foreign Party be sacrificed. Lenin established a close relationship with Atatürk, and Khrushchev with Nasser, despite the fact the Turkish and Egyptian Communists were being repressed.

120. Finland was compelled by Moscow to limit the size of its armed forces, consult with the USSR on security issues, and cede to the Soviet Union use of a naval base at Porkkalla. But these considerations aside, Finland was left to itself.

possibly have stopped a few determined Red Army divisions.¹²¹ There has also been speculation that perhaps Finland was spared because of its peripheral geographical position or because Stalin wished to make Finland an example to West Europeans of how the USSR could get along with non-Communist neighbors so long as they were compliant, two views which seem to me to be less than convincing.¹²² More persuasive, in my opinion, is Adam Ulam's view that Stalin was restrained chiefly by the knowledge that Finland's independence was a matter taken seriously (for whatever reason) by the United States. American indignation had seemed

121. Many observers have stressed Stalin's respect for Finland's will to fight, and though I do not wish to minimize this factor, I do not find it compelling. I would disagree with the conclusions that Charles Bohlen, one of President Roosevelt's advisors at the wartime conferences, drew from Stalin's comments at Teheran:

Churchill urged Stalin to be lenient with Finland, which had joined Germany in the war on Russia. Stalin replied that he felt that the Finns had been just as cruel and as merciless toward the Russian population as any of the German units, but he nevertheless felt that any country which fought with such courage for its independence deserved consideration. This was perhaps the real reason why the Soviets did not occupy Finland as they did the countries in Eastern Europe. They realized that it would not be an easy task.

Charles E. Bohlen, Witness to History: 1929-1969 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1973), pp. 150-151.

122. In Walter Laqueur's essay, "Finlandization," for example, he writes that "... strategically Finland was less important than other territories annexed by the Russians," though it would seem to me that, viewed from Leningrad, Finland's location would be considered highly strategic. "Nor," in Laqueur's words, "is it unthinkable that Stalin wanted to keep Finland as a showcase for Russia's basically benevolent intentions toward the rest of the world." See Laqueur, A Continent Astray: Europe, 1970-1978 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 222-223.

greater when the Soviet Union attacked "little Finland" in 1939 than when the Nazis and Russians carved up Poland, and it was no secret in Moscow that the US had never declared war on Finland, though Helsinki was a German ally.¹²³ In contrast with the American position on Finland, then, US protests about Soviet behavior elsewhere in Eastern Europe were seen in Moscow as disingenuous, in large part because during the wartime conferences Roosevelt had never seemed deeply concerned with the question of what would be the nature of Eastern Europe's postwar governments. I am inclined to believe that - at least in Germany, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia - Soviet minions were able to establish Communist regimes to an important degree only because Western inattention and inability to support the non-Communist Parties left them the opportunity to do so. Stalin was

123. Adam B. Ulam, Dangerous Relations: The Soviet Union in World Politics, 1970-1982 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 18-19. Ulam cites Roosevelt's concern for Finland as a case of "unwitting containment," and stresses the extent to which American attitudes toward Finland were given emphasis in Moscow:

Beginning in 1944, the forcible imposition of Communism on Eastern Europe had been carried out gradually and carefully, with the Kremlin watching American reactions and adjusting its tactics accordingly. Finland might have been left for the final phase of the process, but by then - 1948 - other events ... made an additional challenge to American susceptibility too risky.

Ibid., p. 19. One should add, however, that in 1948 the Finnish Communists apparently did attempt to seize control of the government. In fairness to Laqueur, it must be said that he also cites as one of the many possible reasons for Stalin's "magnanimity" regarding Finland the belief that annexation of Finland in 1944 or 1945 "would have precipitated a conflict with the West." Laqueur, A Continent Astray, p. 222.

territorially ambitious, but only to the extent that opportunity allowed.

Stalin's insistence upon maintaining absolute control over the new Communist regimes, on the other hand, would not be mitigated by any external factors. The fact that the Yugoslav and Albanian Communists had come to power in their countries without significant assistance from Moscow was a problem which had troubled Stalin as early as 1944. Writing following his meeting in Moscow that year with Stalin, Milovan Djilas insightfully captured the Soviet dictator's obsessive outlook:

Thanks to both ideology and methods, personal experience and historical heritage, he regarded as sure only whatever he held in his fist, and everyone beyond the control of his police was a potential enemy. Because of the conditions of war, the Yugoslav revolution had been wrested from his control, and the power that was generating behind it was becoming too conscious of its potential for him to be able simply to give it orders.¹²⁴

It was completely beside the point that Tito and his colleagues spared no effort to demonstrate just how completely Yugoslavia was committed to the "construction of socialism" or to the "global struggle against imperialism." The bottom line was that the only fact that really counted for anything in Moscow was that Yugoslavia was "a country where the MVD had no say and knew it."¹²⁵ By 1948, after the Czech Communists had seized power at Moscow's urging, and as the last facade of democracy was being

124. Djilas, Conversations with Stalin, p. 82.

125. Franz Borkenau, European Communism (New York: Harper & Row, 1953), p. 521.

shorn away in the other East European states, Stalin resolved to assert once and for all Soviet control over the Yugoslav Party.

Accordingly, on June 28, 1948, after several months of Soviet-inspired behind-the-scenes agitation against Belgrade, the Cominform expelled Yugoslavia, publishing a resolution reproaching the Yugoslavs for following the "wrong line" and for being "adventurous and non-Marxist."¹²⁶ Stalin's goal was nothing less than to bring down Tito and replace him with a more pliable leadership, an objective which was unabashedly translated into ideological terms by Soviet propaganda organs:

The assertion that each country moves toward socialism in its own and completely original way, that there are as many roads to socialism as there are countries, cannot be accepted as correct. The general laws for the transition from capitalism to socialism ... on the

126. "Resolution of the Information Bureau Concerning the Situation in the Communist Party of Yugoslavia," reprinted in Robert Bass and Elizabeth Marbury, The Soviet-Yugoslav Controversy, 1948-1958: A Documentary Record (New York: Prospect Books, 1959), pp. 41-46. See also Viktor Meier, "Yugoslav Communism," in Communism in Europe: Continuity, Change, and the Sino-Soviet Dispute (Volume 1), ed. William E. Griffith (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1964), p. 19.

There is no basis to support Edvard Kardelj's claim that even the first meeting of the Cominform (September 1947, in Szklarska Poreba, Poland) was devoted to reprimanding the Yugoslavs or that the Cominform originally "came into existence only as a part of Stalin's plan to attack Yugoslavia." On the contrary, as originally set up, the Cominform was used as a vehicle for promoting the Yugoslav position (see the next section of this study, The Impact of Factional Competition on Soviet Policy). For Kardelj's remarks, see Edvard Kardelj, Reminiscences: The Struggle for Recognition and Independence, The New Yugoslavia, 1944-1957, trans. David Norris (London: Blond & Briggs, 1982), p. 102.

basis of the experience of the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet state, are mandatory for all countries.¹²⁷

Initially Stalin was confident that at his orders, or those of the NKVD, pro-Soviet elements within the Yugoslav Party would overthrow Tito and install a regime dependent upon Soviet military and secret police support. From mid-1948 through 1950, therefore, Soviet agents did their best to recruit officers from Yugoslav Party, police, army, and government institutions. But although the NKVD managed to coopt, compromise, or otherwise recruit a number of Yugoslav officials (some of whom had important posts), they were wholly unsuccessful in their attempt to have Tito overthrown.¹²⁸ Vladimir Dedijer, one of Tito's advisors, describes the Soviet effort:

The Soviet intelligence service worked hard to "buy" those whom we then called "dead souls" - people who were personally honest but ideologically confused. Others were frightened by the power arrayed against us, and still others - dissatisfied careerists - hoped to fulfill their ambitions by siding with the presumed victors. ... According to some reports, the Russians were even thinking of setting up a Yugoslav government-in-exile.¹²⁹

Kardelj, in similar vein, writes that following the June 1948 Cominform resolution, not a day would go by without some Party

127. Bolshevik, September 15, 1948. Cited in Alexander Dallin, "Soviet Policy Toward Eastern Europe," International Affairs (London) 11 (no. 1, January 1957): p. 50.

128. See for example, Ernst Halperin, The Triumphant Heretic: Tito's Struggle against Stalin (London: Heinemann, 1958) and Adam B. Ulam, Titoism and the Cominform (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952).

129. Vladimir Dedijer, The Battle Stalin Lost: Memoirs of Yugoslavia, 1948-1953 (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1971), p. 157.

official, army officer, or diplomat going over to the Russians. Though the number of defecting officials was never that large, the steady pace of the exodus became a fairly serious psychological challenge to Tito's regime.¹³⁰

When it became apparent to Stalin that he was not going to be able to bring about an anti-Tito Party coup in Belgrade, he turned to the possibility of an outright military invasion of Yugoslavia. Prior to 1949 the armies of the new East European "People's Democracies" had not been enlarged and in many cases had been allowed to dwindle into near insignificance (despite Western fears that Soviet-backed Communist armies would soon be sweeping across the Continent), but now, with Tito branded an enemy of the bloc, satellite armies, particularly in the countries bordering Yugoslavia, were expanded at a rapid rate. Between September 1948 and early 1950, the Hungarian Army, for example, was built up "with dazzling speed," undergoing simultaneous reorganization and rearmament.¹³¹ According to Béla Király, a general in the Hungarian Army at the time, the growth in the size of the satellite armies was tied specifically to a campaign planned against Yugoslavia:

Even while the army was still being refashioned, its integration into Soviet plans for an anti-Yugoslav war was begun. The first such strategic plans were completed before the Rajk trials of 1949, and were revised annually to adjust them to the army's increase in strength. The Hungarian Army's role in these Soviet strategic plans was straightforward: it was to be the

130. Kardelj, Reminiscences, p. 118.

131. Béla Király, "Military Aspects," in Király and Jónás, The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 in Retrospect, pp. 60-61.

first wave of a Soviet offensive against Yugoslavia. The Hungarian Army was to attack between the Danube and Tisza rivers, break through the Yugoslav frontier defenses, advance to Novi Sad, cross the Danube and occupy the Fruska Gora hills to establish a bridgehead south of the Danube, from which Soviet forces could overrun Belgrade itself. Rumanian, Bulgarian and Albanian forces were assigned similar missions in their respective sectors. Where the Polish and Czechoslovak forces were to be thrown in the Hungarian General Staff was not told.¹³²

In June 1950, at the time of the North Korean attack on South Korea, the Soviet-directed East European armies were "poised to strike Yugoslavia." Only the United States' and United Nations' prompt backing of the South Koreans, in Király's view, deterred Stalin from launching an attack against Yugoslavia: "If the conquest of South Korea had gone unopposed," Király wrote, "it is obvious that war would have begun in the Balkans. United Nations resistance in Korea made it likely that an attack on Yugoslavia would also have been opposed, a risk Stalin was unwilling to run."¹³³

Just the same, it is not entirely clear that the Soviet strategic plan regarding Yugoslavia would necessarily have been carried out in the absence of an American response in Korea. It is certain that Stalin must have felt more secure in his position relative to the United States in early 1950 than in late 1945, in large measure because of the successful Soviet detonation of a fission device in 1949, but the victory of the Chinese Communists (a triumph often cited by Western commentators as a source of new

132. Ibid., p. 61.

133. Ibid., p. 62.

confidence for Moscow) was seen in the Kremlin as at best a mixed blessing, while the Soviet atomic arsenal was still minuscule compared to that of the Americans. Stalin surely gave his approval to the North Korean attack, but the initiative probably originated with Kim Il-Sung, not Stalin.¹³⁴ One has a hard time envisioning Stalin planning simultaneous Communist attacks in two far-flung theaters at a time of significant Soviet nuclear inferiority, even taking into consideration Király's point that the Balkan assault was to be delayed until Korea had been unified. But it is nevertheless a historical truth that even the most prudent leader will throw caution to the wind if his adversary lowers his guard too far, and Király's account of the military buildup in the satellites speaks for itself. My point here is that it is one thing to say that extensive military preparations to invade Yugoslavia were underway and another to conclude that in the absence of American will in Korea the attack would in fact have been unleashed. The whole exercise in the Balkans might well have been designed only to browbeat Tito into

134. According to Khrushchev, "the war wasn't Stalin's idea, but Kim Il-sung's." Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, p. 368. Khrushchev's memoirs should be taken with several grains of salt, but I can find no good reason to doubt him here. It is simply very hard to believe that Stalin was eager to go out of his way to risk confrontation with the United States. See also John P. Roche, The History and Impact of Marxist-Leninist Organizational Theory (Cambridge, MA: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1984), pp. 48-49.

submission or to give fuel to his internal pro-Soviet opponents.¹³⁵

Even before Tito succeeded in defying Stalin, the Kremlin had launched a campaign to unmask "Titoists" in all the satellites. Communist leaders in the East European states - Rajk in Hungary, Wladislaw Gomulka in Poland, Traicho Kostov in Bulgaria - were arrested not so much due to any links with the Yugoslavs (though this is what was alleged), but because Stalin was determined to remove from power those who were too popular, too energetic, or, most importantly of all, too likely in Stalin's mind to be insufficiently subservient to the Soviet Union. So it was that in Bulgaria Kostov was arrested and executed "despite his known anti-Titoism,"¹³⁶ while Vladimir Poptomov (the Bulgarian Foreign Minister) was not touched, even though Poptomov had served in Tito's government and Party as late as 1944.¹³⁷ The satellite leaders who managed to survive the cycle of Purges between 1949 and 1953, men like Rákosi in Hungary and Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej in Romania, were those who were most adept in sensing how best to please Stalin and how best to keep their security services occupied in finding "enemies of the state." By the early 1950s, then, although all chances of

135. Nor could Stalin have been unaware of the American covert program of military assistance to Tito that was begun in 1949. See Chapter 3.

136. Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc, p. 94.

137. Ulam, Titoism and the Cominform, p. 214. Poptomov, who was originally from Macedonia, switched to the Bulgarian side near the end of the war. But a better candidate for genuine "Titoism" seemingly never existed.

dominating Yugoslavia had been lost, Stalin's regime had succeeded in winning for itself more than simply complete political control over the rest of Eastern Europe. It had gained through terror and penetration the absolute fealty of six supposedly sovereign governments, whose territory represented for the Soviet Union a glacis of which even Charlemagne would have been envious.

Stalin's death in 1953 was a blow to Moscow's chokehold on Eastern Europe, as a new struggle for power broke out among the leading Soviet figures. For the first time since the death of Andrei Zhdanov in 1948 (see below), factional competition within the Kremlin left dissatisfied elements within the East European parties room for maneuver. With the liquidation of Soviet NKVD Chief Lavrenti Beria and the establishment of Georgi M. Malenkov as Soviet Premier, a Soviet leadership came to power which was agreed only in its determination to reassert Party control over the secret police. The means by which Communist regimes in Eastern Europe wielded power went through a certain relaxation, as the use of terror was in many cases downgraded.¹³⁸ With Malenkov as Premier, the Soviet leadership decided to adjust its international policy as well, a step epitomized by its eagerness to end the war in Korea. Nikita S. Khrushchev, who became First

138. For fuller treatment of this period, see the third section in this chapter, The Kremlin and Hungary: From New Course to Revolution. It should be stressed, however, that in none of the bloc states did arrests abate altogether, and in some cases violence increased: in Romania, for example, Lucretiu Patrascanu was executed in April 1953, while in Poland, Cardinal Wyszynski was arrested in September. See Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc, p. 159.

Secretary of the CPSU on March 14, 1953, fully supported the Party's effort to rein in the secret police in both the Soviet Union and the satellites, although he differed with Malenkov (or at least acted as though he did) on other issues.¹³⁹ Khrushchev's strength was his ability to organize the Soviet Party apparatus to his advantage, and it was this skill, not Khrushchev's position on whether to emphasize consumer goods or heavy industry, or on what would be the nature of war in a nuclear age, which gained Khrushchev the predominant position within the Soviet "collective leadership" by early 1955. This is evident by the fact that once he had ousted Malenkov as Premier, Khrushchev did not hesitate to adopt the same positions which Malenkov had formerly staked out.

Like Malenkov, Khrushchev saw in Stalin's intransigent posture toward the West much that had needlessly provoked the United States into measures such which now hindered Soviet goals - the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and the North Atlantic alliance. A true disciple of Lenin, Khrushchev recognized that the Soviet Union could gain more by assuring the Western powers

139. Khrushchev's accession to the position of First Secretary in 1953 was made possible at least in part by Malenkov's unwise decision to flaunt his new power before consolidating his base of support. On March 10, 1953, a photograph captioned "Greatest Friendship" ran in Pravda, in which Malenkov was seen alone with Stalin and Mao. The photograph was in fact the same photograph that originally had been run in Pravda on February 15, 1950, in which several other Soviet Party leaders had been present as well. The implication was not lost on Malenkov's comrades that if Malenkov could rub them out of a photograph perhaps he could rub them out in more important ways as well. See Leonard Schapiro, The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), p. 559.

that the Kremlin's intentions were benevolent than by pointlessly threatening Moscow's non-Communist neighbors, as Stalin had done with his claims against Turkey or his blockade of West Berlin. Of course, it was Khrushchev, not Stalin, who threatened Paris, London, and Tel Aviv with nuclear destruction in 1956, who created his own Berlin crisis in 1958, and who risked war with the United States by placing missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads into Cuba. Nevertheless, it was under Khrushchev's leadership that the Soviet regime first made the fundamental determination that because the USSR was going to be unable (at least for the foreseeable future, viewed from 1955) to make any gains on the European Central Front, it should redirect its energies toward the promotion of Soviet goals in the Third World. This was to be accompanied by a major buildup of Soviet strategic forces, a campaign which was to be masked by new efforts in the field of disinformation. Khrushchev's tactic for dealing with the West throughout this process was the Leninist program of "Peaceful Coexistence," a policy initiated in grand style in July 1955 by a summit in Geneva with the leaders of Britain, France, and the United States. Though in the West many people assumed Peaceful Coexistence to mean that the Soviet commitment to promoting Communism had been shelved in favor of better relations with the Western democracies, in fact the opposite was the case. Not only did a tactical "cease-fire" with the adversary in Europe not rule out competition in other areas, it required it, as Khrushchev is reported to have told a group of Czech Party officials in 1954:

By peaceful co-existence I do not mean pacifism. I mean a policy that will destroy Imperialism and make the Soviet Union and her allies the strongest economic and military power in the world. It is essential to understand ... that this new policy will be successful only as long as there is a Soviet Marshal behind every diplomat. Peaceful co-existence is not "class peace"; there can never be world peace while one Imperialist lives.¹⁴⁰

Within Europe, Khrushchev's new policy was highlighted by the rapprochement with Yugoslavia and the withdrawal of Soviet forces from eastern Austria. Though Malenkov had never gone as far as a summit with Eisenhower or a trip to Belgrade, these steps were to a large degree arguably logical extensions of Soviet policy from 1953 to February 1955. But it was Khrushchev

140. Quoted in Jan Sejna, We Will Bury You (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1982), p. 26. Sejna's italics. Khrushchev's point was routinely echoed in Soviet journals, which were freely available to any Western official who would take the time to examine them. For example:

Many bourgeois and Social-Democratic ideologists take peaceful coexistence to mean a reconciliation of the two warring, irreconcilable classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and say that it leads to a "fadeout" of the struggle between the antagonistic ideologies, the Socialist and the bourgeois. Marxist-Leninists cannot accept this distorted ... interpretation of the policy of peaceful coexistence which slurs over its class substance and direction and ignores the irreconcilable antagonistic social contradictions of the modern world. The Communist Party has always acted on the assumption that the peaceful coexistence of the two systems does not exclude but, on the contrary, implies a further development of the working people's class struggle.

T. T. Timofeyev, "Against Distortions in the Class Nature of the Leninist Policy of Peaceful Coexistence," International Affairs (Moscow) 8 (August 1963): pp. 18-19. Cited in Richard V. Allen, Peace or Peaceful Coexistence? (Chicago: American Bar Association, 1966), p. 120.

who was conscious of the Soviet Union's tremendous disadvantage in atomic arms compared with the United States, and it was Khrushchev who could see that in order to afford the cost of an expanded nuclear program, the Soviet military would need to reduce the size of its conventional forces, a step made necessary in any case by the reduced number of soldiers available because of the wartime drop in the birth rate and generational losses. It was apparent to Khrushchev that Soviet forces were spread too thin, and without the absolute control over the Soviet and satellite Parties which Stalin had enjoyed, Khrushchev was not going to be able to keep every corner of the East European empire in line. Either means other than intimidation and terror would have to be used, or certain territories would have to be abandoned, or both.¹⁴¹ The policies of accommodating Tito, evacuating Austria, and sitting down with the Americans were thus decisions which bore Khrushchev's own imprimatur, and it was therefore Khrushchev who was later assailed in the Politburo (even by Malenkov) for the turmoil in Eastern Europe that ensued. However, it is instructive that despite the criticism which Khrushchev faced in the wake of the Hungarian Revolution, he was still committed enough to the expensive nuclear program - and consequently sufficiently obliged to save military costs

141. Indeed, it is doubtful whether even Stalin was ever very confident that he could succeed in holding as much territory in Eastern Europe as he did. Following World War II, in fact, an important part of the Soviet leadership felt that the chances were not so remote that the Soviet Union might be compelled to withdraw from at least part of Eastern Europe. See the next section, The Impact of Factional Competition on Soviet Policy.

elsewhere - that he elected to withdraw the Red Army from Romania in 1958.¹⁴² Finally, then, it was with a sense of personal achievement that Khrushchev could declare in 1960, "In our country, the armed forces have to a considerable extent been transformed into rocket forces."¹⁴³

Khrushchev's journey to Yugoslavia in May 1955, where he recognized Tito's "Socialist" credentials and disingenuously blamed Beria for the Soviet-Yugoslav rift, marked in practice Khrushchev's acceptance of "National Roads to Communism." Tito insisted that the Kremlin remove from power its satellite satraps which had tried to bring him down after 1948, and Rákosi topped the list. At the time, Khrushchev was not prepared to go that far, but in his attack on Stalin at the February 1956 CPSU Congress¹⁴⁴ Khrushchev went a long way toward making the position of all the bloc's Stalinists untenable. But the very fact that Khrushchev had traveled to Belgrade, where for all intents and purposes he had come to terms with Tito, in itself encouraged

142. Of course, by 1958, the chief critics of Khrushchev's policies in 1955 and 1956 had been removed from office.

143. Pravda, January 15, 1960. Cited in Carl A. Linden, Khrushchev and the Soviet Leadership, 1957-1964 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), p. 93. Significant though the Soviet shift to nuclear forces under Khrushchev was, it did not compare in relative magnitude to the American shift in emphasis under President Eisenhower toward "Massive Retaliation" with nuclear weapons. Of the two major powers, the United States could less afford the shift, since it was the Soviet Union, even after its withdrawals from Austria and Romania, which retained an overwhelming conventional military advantage in Europe. For the Eisenhower administration's "New Look," see Chapter 3.

144. See Chapter 5.

nationalist reformers throughout the satellites, particularly in Hungary and Poland. Moreover, a second potential alternative to Stalinist rule - that of neutrality - was brought to East Europeans' attention in May 1955, when the Soviet leadership acceded to the Austrian State Treaty. And if the Austrian Treaty were not proof enough to Eastern Europe's discontented elements that the Soviet regime under Khrushchev was ready to pull back in places, in September 1955 the USSR evacuated its naval base at Porkkalla, Finland.

For Khrushchev and the Kremlin, however, the concessions in Austria and Finland were not without their benefits. The neutrality of Austria established a neutral 500-mile corridor from Geneva to Vienna across which NATO troops, equipment, and even aircraft could not move (and this would prove to be a crucial advantage for the Soviet side in the Hungarian crisis, although Khrushchev of course did not foresee that specific scenario), while the evacuation of Porkkalla gained the USSR a measure of appreciation in a country where a Communist coup had failed and where Soviet geopolitical interests had been safeguarded in any case.¹⁴⁵ Since the pullout of Soviet forces from Austria had removed the pretext for the presence of the Red Army in Hungary and Romania, the Soviet leadership found it

145. See Kevin Devlin, "Finland in 1948: Lessons of a Crisis," in Hammond, The Anatomy of Communist Takeovers. Devlin's point, well worth noting, is that while Western analysts have properly focused on the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia as a case study of Communist tactics in the face of democratic laxity, we have neglected examination of the Communists' unsuccessful effort in Finland.

instrumental to establish the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) as a multilateral justification for the ongoing presence in Eastern Europe of Soviet forces. The entry of the German Federal Republic into NATO, a move which Moscow vigorously had sought to prevent, was another factor in the establishment of the Warsaw Pact. In truth, of course, neither Khrushchev nor any of his colleagues in the Kremlin had any intention of creating a genuine alliance of equals along the lines of NATO, but found in the Pact the least problematic cover both for retaining troops in Hungary and elsewhere and for masking the bitterness of Moscow's failed Germany policy.¹⁴⁶ For Rákosi and his followers, however, the Soviet pullout from Austria represented less of a threat to their position than did the rapprochement with Tito, which restored to grace the leader who epitomized the challenge to Stalinism and who still refused to have anything to do with Rákosi or his regime.

The Impact of Factional Competition on Soviet Policy

Soviet policy decisions regarding Eastern Europe throughout the period just reviewed cannot be understood without appreciating that, to a large degree, Soviet policy toward the

146. Just the same, Moscow's admission of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) into the Pact as a full member reflected a decision in the Kremlin to accept the division of Germany as permanent. Not only was the GDR a signatory of the Treaty, but the East German Minister of Defense immediately became one of the Pact's Deputy Commanders-in-Chief. Robin Alison Remington, The Warsaw Pact: Case Studies in Communist Conflict Resolution (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), p. 23.

satellites was played out as an extension of the competition for power among top leaders in Moscow. Soviet policy toward Hungary was no exception, although it was not until Georgi Malenkov backed Imre Nagy and the "New Course" in Hungary in 1953 that Hungary itself became the focal point in the Soviet leaders' struggle with each other for predominance. Prior to 1953, Yugoslavia (and East Germany, for a brief time) had been at the center of the battle. For most of this period Josef Stalin was either above the fray or removed from the scene, with the result that his subordinates, then successors, were concerned chiefly with building and maintaining support for themselves within the CPSU, the Red Army, and the various Soviet intelligence services. In Eastern Europe, thousands of Soviet Party representatives, military commanders, and intelligence "advisors" dominated the affairs of the new puppet regimes.¹⁴⁷ East European leaders became dependent for political survival either on a patron in Moscow or on one of the prominent Soviet officials on the scene, and the policy of the satellite regimes therefore came to reflect whatever steps the Soviet protagonist favored.

From 1946 to 1948, Soviet policy in Eastern Europe was determined to a great extent by the competition for power in

147. For an insight into the dynamics of Soviet control over Eastern Europe's ministries and police, see Bedrich Breugel, "Methods of Soviet Domination in Satellite States," International Affairs (London) 27 (no. 1, January 1951): pp. 32-37. Breugel, who was an official in the Czech Ministry for Foreign Affairs before fleeing to the West, wrote that the various international Departments of the CPSU directed the foreign policy of the East European states, but that the "Soviet Ministry of State Security ... in each Satellite State is the real Government of the country." Ibid., p. 35.

Moscow between Georgi Malenkov and Andrei Zhdanov, a struggle made possible in large part by Stalin's decision to follow his doctors' suggestions and retire for much of the year to the warm Black Sea climate (and like most dictators, Stalin was inclined in any case to let his lieutenants fight things out).¹⁴⁸ Malenkov and his supporters believed that the Western powers (Great Britain as well as the United States) had emerged from the war in a relatively strong position and that the Soviet Union would be doing well just to consolidate its wartime gains. In this view, it could not even be excluded from possibility that the USSR might be compelled to withdraw from parts of Eastern Europe.¹⁴⁹ The Zhdanov group, on the other hand, interpreted the world "Correlation of Forces" in a more favorable light for the

148. For the fullest depiction of the struggle between Malenkov and Zhdanov, see Gavriel D. Ra'anan, International Policy Formation in the USSR: Factional "Debates" during the Zhdanovschina (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1983). This thesis is contested by Boris Levytsky, who contends that "It was not possible for either Zhdanov or Malenkov to take any step on his own initiative or to effectuate any personal ties of his own, either in internal or external policy." According to Levytsky, "the purges, intrigues, and assassinations" in this period "were entirely Stalin's work." Boris Levytsky, The Uses of Terror: The Soviet Secret Service, 1917-1970 (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1971), p. 188. In my view, however, Levytsky does not bring sufficient evidence to support his claim that Stalin was calling all the shots. In fact, much of the material in Levytsky's account seems to me to be consistent with the idea that top-level factional rivalry within the CPSU played an instrumental role in the conduct of Soviet foreign policy.

149. This thesis was spelled out most clearly by the Hungarian-born economist Evgeniy Varga, in 1946 the Director of Moscow's Institute of World Economics and World Politics. See Ra'anan, International Policy Formation in the USSR, pp. 62-64.

Soviet side. Western weakness and disunity, it was felt, required that Communists assertively build up regimes in Eastern Europe and work to come to power elsewhere as well. The United States, seen in the Zhdanovite perspective to be the principal Soviet adversary, was believed to be too far removed from Europe to play a major role.

Within Eastern Europe, the Malenkov group was greatly strengthened by Malenkov's alliance with NKVD Chief Lavrenti Beria.¹⁵⁰ It was in the countries which had been liberated by the Red Army - Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Romania - that the power and influence of the secret police was most evident, and it was these countries, along with eastern Germany, which came under the domain of Malenkov's Committee for the Rehabilitation of the Economy of the Liberated Areas.¹⁵¹ In the

150. Stalin's daughter, for example, wrote that:

... until March, 1953, one could always see Malenkov and Beria walking arm in arm. They always moved as a couple and as such used to come to my father at his dacha, in appearance the closest of pals. This friendship, so obvious to everyone, must have been based on their joint dealings in some debatable matters.

See Svetlana Alliluyeva, Only One Year (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 420. Quoted in Ra'anan, International Policy Formation in the USSR, p. 19.

151. Nevertheless, Zhdanov enjoyed important leverage over the Red Army's military commanders, due to the fact that the Army's Main Political Administration (MPA) was dominated by Zhdanovites. Ibid, pp. 22-25. Similarly, Zhdanov did his best to place supporters within the NKVD, where they could report to him on Beria's activities and plans (presuming Beria didn't arrest them first). Aleksei Kuznetsov, for example, acted as one of Zhdanov's agents within Beria's apparat beginning in 1946. See Peter Deriabin, Watchdogs of Terror: Russian Bodyguards from the Tsars to the Commissars

first years of the Soviet occupation of the East European countries, Beria and his subordinates worked to forge satellite secret police forces which would answer to the NKVD, while Malenkov's lieutenants ordered the removal of industrial plants to the USSR in anticipation of a time in which Soviet power might not be able to hold the new territories. It would appear that Beria's secret police played a particularly important role in Romania and Hungary, non-Slavic countries which had been allied with Hitler. By contrast, Zhdanov's group was allied with the East European remnant of the international Communist apparatus, most prominently Yugoslav leader Tito and Bulgarian Party chief Georgi Dimitrov, each a long time veteran of the Comintern who favored full exploitation of the "favorable objective international conditions."¹⁵² Tito called for an aggressive Communist campaign in Greece and pressed territorial claims against Italy and Austria. When the Cominform was established in September 1947 it was as a Zhdanovite creation, and its headquarters were to be in Belgrade. Interestingly, the Albanian

(University Publications of America, 1984), pp. 234, 305-307.

152. It had been Dimitrov, as Secretary-General of the Comintern, who had gone on Radio Moscow on August 31, 1939, to defend the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, though this did not prevent him from hailing the British in July 1941 as "gallant fighters for the freedom of the world" (until Barbarossa they were "mercenaries"). See Anthony Cave Brown and Charles B. MacDonald, On a Field of Red: The Communist International and the Coming of World War II (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1981), pp. 507, 595. Discovering "objective conditions" would appear to be a highly subjective art. See also Roche, The History and Impact of Marxist-Leninist Organizational Theory.

Communist Party was not represented at the founding meeting, because in the Zhdanovite scheme Albania was to be annexed by Yugoslavia. Moreover, whenever Zhdanov or his supporters publicly ranked the East European states according to their efforts in building Communism, the "pecking order" had Yugoslavia and Bulgaria at the top, followed by Poland and Czechoslovakia (Slavic states, but not greatly influenced by the Zhdanovites), and only then Romania and Hungary (non-Slav, former Nazi satellites, and largely outside of the Zhdanovite domain).¹⁵³ Tito, for his part, had his own reasons for backing the Zhdanov group. For one thing, it was Beria's NKVD which was trying to penetrate and dominate the Yugoslav Party and state apparatus, and Tito's experiences in the Soviet Union in the late 1930's were a stark reminder of the lengths to which the Soviet secret police was capable of going to assert its control.¹⁵⁴

Until early 1948 the Zhdanovite faction had the upper hand, a position epitomized at the founding session of the Cominform, where Malenkov was required to agree with statements reflecting Yugoslav and Zhdanovite positions. Zhdanov and his disciples

153. In the Malenkovite ranking of countries enjoying "democracy of a new type," on the other hand, Czechoslovakia and Poland were placed first, Romania (with no wartime Communist Party or partisan resistance worth mentioning) was ranked ahead of Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria was omitted altogether. Ra'anan, International Policy Formation in the USSR, pp. 39, 64.

154. The destruction of almost all the Yugoslav Communist cadres inside the USSR in 1937 and 1938 was probably conducted while Nikolai Yezhov still headed the NKVD, though it is unlikely that Beria played no role. But since it seems probable that Tito survived the purge only by indicting his Yugoslav comrades, the episode might not have caused him to fear the NKVD as much as one might have expected.

singled out the leadership of the French and Italian Parties for abuse, condemning them for being too hesitant in their fight to take power,¹⁵⁵ while the Czechs were similarly excoriated prior to their successful coup d'etat in February 1948. In the Balkans, Tito and Dimitrov went to great efforts to back the Communist insurgents in Greece, in the belief both that Britain was too weak, and too tired of war, to give effective assistance to the government side (which proved correct) and that the United States was unable or unwilling to act in Britain's absence (which proved incorrect). Where Stalin was careful to avoid unnecessary conflict with the Americans, Tito seemed to recognize no restraints, supporting the Greek Communists even after US involvement had become apparent and taking the unusually provocative step of shooting down two American airplanes in the Trieste area. At the same time, Belgrade was readying two army divisions to carry out the incorporation of Albania into the Yugoslav Federation, a step which Tito believed to have been approved by Stalin and in which the Albanian Communists would therefore be obliged to cooperate.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, Belgrade's

155. This came despite the French and Italian retort that they were simply "following exactly the course Stalin had prescribed." Borkenau, European Communism, p. 522.

156. Only after the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform was it possible for the Albanian regime to denounce the Yugoslavs, which was thus also the first occasion on which the Albanians were able to act as loyal members of the "international proletariat" and as nationalists at the same time (a situation shared by the Italian Communist Party). In Tirana the idea of annexation by Yugoslavia was seen as some kind of bad joke - the Illyrian heritage predated the Slavic by centuries.

territorial ambitions with regard to its smaller Communist neighbor had not been without approval from Moscow: "We have no special interest in Albania," Stalin told Milovan Djilas during one of his visits to the Soviet Union, "We agree to Yugoslavia swallowing Albania!"¹⁵⁷

This exchange between Djilas and Stalin took place in December 1947, a full six months before the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform and three months before the first exchange of letters between the Yugoslav Party and CPSU Central Committees on the role of Soviet secret police personnel in Yugoslavia. It would seem unlikely, therefore, that Stalin would already have made the decision to try to bring Tito down. But Djilas was suspicious, and with good reason, that there may have been more to Stalin's position on Albania than pure generosity to Belgrade.¹⁵⁸ The Yugoslav leadership had aspired to create a Communist Federation of Yugoslavia, Albania, "liberated" Greece, and Bulgaria (and perhaps even Romania and Hungary), which Belgrade would necessarily dominate. In the Yugoslav scheme, Bulgaria, for instance, was to be reduced to the status of a

157. Djilas, Conversations with Stalin, p. 143. When Djilas protested that he had meant merely "unification" (and that Tito's proposal stemmed from only "revolutionary motives," whatever that meant), Molotov answered, "But that is swallowing!" and Stalin added, "Yes, yes. Swallowing! But we agree with you: you ought to swallow Albania - the sooner the better." Ibid, pp. 143-144.

158. Djilas recorded that "while writing the dispatch [concerning Yugoslav policy toward Albania] the next day, the thought occurred to me that it might someday be used against my country's government, and so I formulated it carefully..." Ibid., p. 146.

constituent "Socialist Republic" (along the lines of Slovenia or Bosnia), an arrangement which Dmitrov apparently somehow had been cajoled into supporting.¹⁵⁹ But in the discussions with Yugoslav and Bulgarian delegations in February 1948, Stalin now upbraided the Bulgarians for planning a federation with Romania - "this is nonsense!" Stalin said - and reproached the Yugoslavs for trying to annex Albania: "You did not consult us at all regarding the entry of your army into Albania. ... Albania is an independent state!"¹⁶⁰ Stalin made these accusations despite Molotov's

159. Ra'anan, International Policy Formation in the USSR, p. 139. Just the same, Tito and Dmitrov are probably the only two Yugoslav and Bulgarian leaders ever to have come to an agreement on Macedonia, which was surely one reason why Stalin forced them to break off the pact. Indeed, successive leaders in Moscow since 1948 have all seen the Macedonian question as a key to Soviet leverage and influence in the Balkans: when relations between Moscow and Belgrade are cool, Sofia raises the Macedonian issue, and when Soviet-Yugoslav relations warm up Sofia drops it.

Federation among the various new East European regimes seems to have been a favorite Zhdanovite theme, probably in the double belief that Communism in Eastern Europe would be strengthened thereby and that the new political entity would be easier for the Zhdanov group to dominate. Dmitrov, for his part, drew up a plan for Bulgarian federation with Romania, in which Sofia would of course have been the controlling partner.

160. Djilas, Conversations with Stalin, pp. 177-180. And the annexation of Albania was not the only forward policy that was to be broken off, as Stalin told the Yugoslavs in no uncertain terms to terminate their support of the Greek Communists:

The uprising in Greece has to fold up. ... they have no prospect of success at all. What do you think, that Great Britain and the United States - the United States, the most powerful state in the world - will permit you to break their line of communication in the Mediterranean Sea! Nonsense. And we have no navy. The uprising in Greece must be stopped, and as quickly as possible.

admission in the same discussion that both the Bulgarian-Yugoslav and Bulgarian-Romanian pacts had been approved in advance by the Soviet side, and despite Stalin's own encouraging comments to Djilas two months earlier (and one can safely presume that until this point Belgrade had been encouraged in its support of the Greek war). This would lead one to suspect that the Soviet backing given in 1947 to Yugoslavia's territorial ambitions might well have been only a tactic to draw Tito into a trap. Such a suspicion is borne out by the completely unworkable system of East European federations which Stalin claimed to have been willing to approve - uniting not only Bulgaria with Yugoslavia and Albania (despite his objections to Belgrade's efforts in that direction), but Romania together with Hungary, and Poland together with Czechoslovakia - in each case pairing together states with historical animosities and territorial irredenta.¹⁶¹ In Kardelj's account, Stalin is said to have gone even further:

If federations are ever created, and in my opinion they will be, then we would have to unite the Russian republic with Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, the Ukraine with Rumania and Hungary, and Byelorussia with Czechoslovakia and Poland, or something like that.¹⁶²

Seemingly, therefore, Stalin had never been serious about Yugoslav incorporation of Albania, and at some point in 1947 Tito

Ibid., pp. 181-182.

161. Ibid., p. 177., and Ra'anan, International Policy Formation in the USSR, p. 140.

162. Kardelj, Reminiscences, p. 104. According to Kardelj, Stalin knew full well that in any of these proposed pairings of East European states, "internal contradictions would arise which it would be possible to settle only with the intervention of the Soviet Union." Ibid., p. 105.

(and probably Zhdanov as well) was identified as a dangerous subordinate who needed to be brought into line.

It is instructive that in the same period that Zhdanovite efforts to bring Albania under Belgrade's control were being (probably falsely) encouraged by Stalin, Zhdanov was unable to prevail upon Stalin to support forward policies in certain other areas. Finland, for example, remained outside the Soviet empire, though Zhdanov had argued for its incorporation.¹⁶³ Whether Finland was left independent because Malenkov or another top Soviet leader was concerned about a possibly vigorous American reaction to a Soviet takeover, or because Stalin himself thought it better to be prudent, it is hard to say. But Stalin's reprimand to the Yugoslavs concerning the war in Greece seemed to reflect the Malenkovite line of thinking (though the US was made out to be the principal adversary in Stalin's thinking), and it is likely that Stalin's move against the Zhdanovites in 1948 was prompted by reports from Malenkov or Beria that Zhdanov and Tito had become too strong.¹⁶⁴ When the Cominform met in June 1948 to expel Yugoslavia, it is significant that it did so in Bucharest,

163. "We made a mistake in not occupying Finland," Zhdanov confided to Djilas in December 1947, "Everything would have been set up if we had." Djilas, Conversations with Stalin, p. 155.

164. Zhdanov died "unexpectedly" in August, and one might have accepted that his death had been natural (however convenient it might have been for his opponents), but for the fact that four years later, as Stalin prepared to purge the Malenkovite group, the Soviet security organs were charged with "insufficient vigilance" with respect to Zhdanov's death. When Dmitrov died later in 1948 during a visit to the Soviet Union, Tito found it expedient to decline his invitation to the "Socialist Motherland."

one of the centers of NKVD activity in Eastern Europe and therefore, it would seem, one of Beria and Malenkov's bailiwicks. In the same vein, when Arso Jovanovic, the Chief of Staff of the Yugoslav Army, was arrested by Tito's police in August 1948, it was no coincidence (as the Yugoslavs were naturally highly aware) that he was apprehended near the Romanian border. It would seem that if Jovanovic had succeeded in reaching Romania he was to have been made the leader of an anti-Tito "free Yugoslav" movement in exile.¹⁶⁵ In fact, much of the Soviet posturing and intimidation against the Yugoslav regime in the years between 1948 and 1953 was conducted from Romania, despite the fact that Yugoslavia and Romania were probably the only two adjoining East European states with no major historical or territorial animosities.

The other country most closely involved in the Soviet effort after 1948 to undermine Tito's regime was Hungary.¹⁶⁶ Indeed, even before the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform, the Hungarian Communist leadership was involved in (though not at the center of) the struggle between the Malenkov and Zhdanov factions. Rákosi himself does not appear ever to have forged close ties to either the Malenkov or Zhdanovite camps, and his

165. Wolff, The Balkans in Our Time, pp. 365-366. Jovanovic was one of the most important Yugoslav figures to have been recruited by the NKVD in their unsuccessful effort to overthrow Tito.

166. At the same time that Jovanovic was apprehended, for instance, one of his deputies was caught trying to enter Hungary. Ibid., p. 366. In the years after 1948 the Hungarian regime frequently stirred up border incidents with the Yugoslavs and routinely overflowed Yugoslav territory.

selection by Stalin to head the Hungarian Party after the war initially came as a surprise to many of the Hungarian veterans of the Comintern.¹⁶⁷ In all likelihood Stalin tolerated Rákosi as Hungarian First Secretary only because Rákosi's many years in Horthy's prisons had won him international recognition (at least on the Left), a background which held out the possibility of forestalling Western objections to the imposition of a Communist regime in Hungary. But Stalin knew that Communism was going to be unpopular in Hungary no matter who was at the helm, which is why Soviet rule in Hungary was to rest on the Hungarian security organizations which the Red Army and the Soviet secret police would raise, and not on the Hungarian Communist Party. Rákosi, for his part, was well aware that he did not enjoy Stalin's full confidence, and therefore spared no effort to fulfill zealously the Kremlin's every objective.¹⁶⁸ As soon as Rákosi learned that

167. Several of the Hungarian Communists who spent the war years in the Soviet Union with Rákosi later told Béla Szász that Rákosi, unlike other prominent East European exiles, was never given any important responsibilities in Moscow. Szász, Volunteers for the Gallows, p. 158. And George Heltai said to me that when he visited Moscow with Rákosi a few years after the war, he discovered that Rákosi's "great contact" in the Kremlin was none other than the mid-level Central Committee official responsible for Hungarian affairs. Heltai realized then that Rákosi had no important patron in Moscow. Indeed, Stalin received Rákosi only when he received the rest of the Hungarian delegation. See Heltai's interview with the author, Appendix F.

168. Rákosi was always conscious that he ruled Hungary only by Stalin's ambivalent consent, the almost arbitrary pattern of authority which one analyst felicitously has called Moscow's "cynical grace." See Stephen Borsody, "The Revolution and the West: Imre Nagy and Eurocommunism," in Király and Jónás, The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 in Retrospect, p. 130.

Stalin's break with Tito was imminent, for example (and Rákosi, even more so than most apparatchiks, was highly adept in anticipating Stalin's next move), he went out of his way to provoke the Yugoslavs and to denounce them to the Kremlin.¹⁶⁹ Kardelj reports that Rákosi responded to Yugoslavia's efforts to prevent a complete break with Hungary with a message to Tito that read, in straightforward fashion, "Not every cockerel can be king of its own dung heap."¹⁷⁰ Rákosi took these and other steps against Yugoslavia despite the fact that (according to some accounts, at least) he owed his career to Tito.¹⁷¹

It was in fact Hungarian Deputy Party Secretary Ernő Gerő who enjoyed both the closest ties to Tito and the most important contacts in the Kremlin. Gerő and Tito had both risen to power through the Comintern, in whose service each had been responsible for the deaths of (at a minimum) hundreds of Communists. Before being awarded dominant positions in the Hungarian and Yugoslav Parties, Gerő and Tito "earned their stripes" during the Spanish Civil War, playing leading roles in the purges of those leftists

169. Szász, Volunteers for the Gallows, p. 159. Another account contends that Rákosi turned a cold shoulder to Tito as early as 1947, when Tito made an official visit to Budapest but Rákosi refused to see him. Irving, Uprising!, p. 66. It is not difficult to imagine MVD or other Malenkovite officials in Hungary supplying Rákosi with intelligence against Yugoslavia and urging him on.

170. Kardelj, Reminiscences, p. 119.

171. See, for instance, Ernst Halperin: "More than any other Communist leader in the satellite States, Mátyás Rákosi was in Tito's debt. In the early years after the war, when his defeat at the elections had cost him his credit in the Kremlin, Tito was Rákosi's only advocate there." Halperin, The Triumphant Heretic, p. 189.

whom Stalin found too radical or independent. According to Jaume Miravittles, at one time a Secretary in the "Autonomous Government of Catalonia," the Comintern's entire network of watchdogs in Spain was headed up by Gerō, who worked under the code name of "Comrade Pedro."¹⁷² Gerō monitored the work of Soviet Ambassador Marcel Rosenberg and Consul (in Barcelona) Vladimir Antonov-Ovseyenko, and was reported to have helped carry out the assassination of POUM leader Andrés Nin and personally to have been responsible for the recall of Antonov-Ovseyenko to Moscow (where he was quickly executed).¹⁷³ Similarly, according to at least one account, it was Gerō that first recruited Ramón Mercader, the man who assassinated Leon Trotsky in Mexico in 1940.¹⁷⁴ Gerō was then rewarded for his efforts by being made a

172. Jaume Miravittles, "The Man Who Denounced Antonov-Ovseenko," The New Leader 39 (no. 32, August 6, 1956): p. 11. Tito's code name was "Comrade Walter." Miravittles claims that Gerō was "the real chief of both the foreign and native communists in Spain," a statement which I consider particularly significant and revealing. However, I have been unable to confirm Miravittles' claim elsewhere, although several sources hint that Gerō's responsibilities in Spain were of the most nefarious type. Gyula Háy, for example, writes that Gerō was involved in "some extremely high-powered secret Soviet mission." Háy, Born 1900, p. 60. See also George Heltai's remarks, interview with the author, Appendix F.

173. Miravittles, "The Man Who Denounced Antonov-Ovseenko," p. 11.

174. Irving, Uprising!, p. 47. No source is given for this claim, although it is known that Mercader was a PolitCommissar in Spain during the Civil War and was sent by the NKVD to Moscow in December 1937 for more extensive training. See Isaac Don Levine, The Mind of an Assassin (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1959), pp. 19-21, 37. According to Levine, Mercader's mentor in Spain was an NKVD operative named Leonid Eitingon, who went by the aliases General Kotov or "Comrade Pablo."

deputy to Dmitri Manuilsky, "Stalin's personal representative on the Comintern's Executive Committee."¹⁷⁵ Manuilsky was one of Andrei Zhdanov's most steadfast associates, which suggests at a minimum that Zhdanov was not opposed to Gerō's promotion. During the war, moreover, Gerō was second-in-command to Manuilsky in a "Special Department" of the Soviet Defense Ministry which carried out propaganda and psychological operations directed at foreign armies. In particular, Gerō was closely involved in the campaign against the Hungarian army prior to its defeat at Voronezh.¹⁷⁶ In 1943, Gerō played an important role in the "National Committee for a Free Germany" which Manuilsky and Zhdanov's brother-in-law, A. S. Shcherbakov, were preparing for "liberated" Germany.¹⁷⁷ With Soviet victory in the war, the Zhdanovite position on Germany called for the creation and promotion of a pro-Soviet party which would have some degree of nationalist credibility. Accordingly, Colonel S. I. Tulpanov, Zhdanov's key protege in the Soviet occupation zone, worked (against the efforts of the Malenkovites) to pull German Communists and Socialists together into a new entity, the Socialist Unity Party. When Tulpanov was in need of friendly facilities for a ceremony honoring Walter Ulbricht and his colleagues, he turned to Imre Horváth, head of

175. Brown and MacDonald, On a Field of Red, p. 475. See also Branko Lazitch and Milorad M. Drachkovitch, Biographical Dictionary of the Comintern (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1973), p. 118.

176. Háý, Born 1900, p. 261.

177. Cited in Ra'anán, International Policy Formation in the USSR, p. 96.

the Hungarian Mission in East Berlin and apparently one of Gerő's supporters. Through Horváth's good offices, Ulbricht, Wilhelm Pieck, and Otto Grotewohl were given instructions on how to run the country.¹⁷⁸ Following the founding conference of the Cominform in September 1947, Gerő - now one of the top Hungarian leaders - was named by the Hungarian Politburo as chairman of one of the two commissions drawn up to implement the decisions ordered by the Cominform. Gerő submitted a report reflecting the Zhdanovite position, now bloc policy:

As a result of domestic and international developments and contrary to our previous conceptions, a new and serious forward step is possible... In my view, it would be a mistake to adhere to the original schedule and not to take advantage of the favorable circumstances.¹⁷⁹

Because Gerő's background in the Comintern and ties to Manuilsky and Zhdanov closely paralleled those of Tito, he and

178. Háy, Born 1900, pp. 288-289. In Háy's words, "What is today the German Democratic Republic was ... first outlined that evening." Pieck, Ulbricht, Gerő, and Horváth had all spent most of the war in the Communist expatriate community in Moscow. Grotewohl was a former Social Democrat. Horváth would continue to promote the forward Zhdanovite line for several years, a stance which would place him in direct opposition to Imre Nagy. For example, it was Horváth who was Hungarian Foreign Minister at the time of the 1956 Revolution, until Nagy replaced him with George Heltai.

179. Gerő's report is quoted in Ivan T. Berend, Ujjáépítés és a nagytőke elleni harc Magyarországon 1945-1948 (Reconstruction and the Struggle against Big Capital in Hungary, 1945-1948) (Budapest: 1972), p. 373. Cited in Charles Gati, Hungary and the Soviet Bloc (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1986), p. 121. The "previous conceptions" and faulty "original schedule" which Gerő mentioned are almost certainly allusions to the policies taken by the (Soviet-occupied) East European states in the two years immediately following the war, a period in which the Malenkovite line generally prevailed.

Tito became natural ideological allies when the Hungarian and Yugoslav Communist Parties came to power upon the defeat of the Nazis. This association did not, of course, prevent Gerő from denouncing Tito after June 1948, when Gerő's own political survival depended on pro forma blasts against Belgrade. Neither was Gerő deterred by his own past from sending Hungarian subordinates to their deaths as "Titoists" or from participating in the case against László Rajk. But Gerő's expedient denunciations of Tito did not require him to abandon Zhdanovite views on internal economic and political processes. Even after Zhdanov's death, Gerő never adopted the Varga thesis or closed ranks with Imre Nagy. Tito, however, despite his own longstanding opposition to Nagy, was not so forgiving of Gerő, and insisted to the Soviet leadership after 1953 that Rákosi and Gerő would have to be removed from power before he could agree to a full reconciliation. In October 1956 the Yugoslavs nevertheless very grudgingly welcomed Gerő on an official state visit, though it was János Kádár whom Tito wanted to see as Hungarian First Secretary.

Another leading Hungarian figure with possibly close ties to the Zhdanov camp was József Révai. Like Zhdanov, Révai was responsible for overseeing cultural affairs, for which - if for nothing else - he was known in some circles as the "Hungarian Zhdanov."¹⁸⁰ Also like Zhdanov, Révai was considered the top

180. See Arthur Karasz, "Resistance in the Iron Curtain Countries," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 271 (September 1950): p. 150.

authority on ideology and doctrine within the Party. As two of Hungary's Communist writers could attest, "Everyone knew ... that Révai's opinion represented the official opinion of the Party and thus ended all argument."¹⁸¹ When officials in Hungary's foreign ministry drew up a plan to create a (Communist-dominated) Danubian confederation of Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary - in their minds the most expedient way to make Communism a permanent feature of Central Europe - Révai approved the idea. The foreign ministry officials were led to believe that there was at least one group in Moscow favorably inclined toward their plan, but whatever Soviet support there might have been disappeared in 1948 with Zhdanov's death.¹⁸² In the meantime

181. Aczél and Méray, The Revolt of the Mind, p. 76. Aczél and Méray go on to say that a comparison between Zhdanov and Révai was "valid if one considered only their duties," because "there was no resemblance whatsoever in their personalities or in their talents." Ibid., p. 82. But they do not stop to consider to what extent Révai and Zhdanov may have been linked by operational or factional alliance.

182. See the author's interview with George Heltai, Appendix F. The idea of forming a federation out of Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary ran directly counter to Stalin's Machiavellian penchant for linking together into potential federations only pairs of states with historical antipathies. The states which the Hungarians were proposing to unite represented a natural political unit - the core of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. Of course, the prospect of establishing any important political entity that would be dominated by Budapest, a defeated Nazi ally, was something which Zhdanov was in no position to champion. But if the Danubian Confederation were to have included Yugoslavia and therefore to have been dominated by Belgrade, then it might have earned Zhdanov's more energetic support.

It is not clear what role, if any, Yugoslavia was to have played in the Danubian Confederation which the Hungarians were proposing. An American intelligence officer stationed in Budapest in 1947 learned that Soviet officials were planning to make the old Hungarian Royal Palace into the Confederation's headquarters, indicating that Hungary

Révai had served as one of Hungary's two delegates to the September 1947 Cominform conference (Mihály Farkas was the other), in which the more forward line was officially adopted as bloc policy. Though this does not appear to be well known, it would seem that the Hungarians, like the Czech, Italian, and French representatives, apparently were chided to some extent for not having moved vigorously enough in establishing a Communist regime.¹⁸³ Back in Budapest, Révai moved quickly to implement the directive.

None of this provides any certain evidence that there was a factional link between Zhdanov and Révai, however, and one must keep in mind that in the Hungarian purges which followed Stalin's break with the Zhdanovites both Révai and Gerő emerged unscathed. But it is significant that when Imre Nagy was made Hungarian Premier in June 1953, Révai was compelled to resign from the Politburo (as was Farkas).¹⁸⁴ In fact, even before Nagy came to power, Révai was taking steps that did not match the prevailing mood in the Kremlin: in 1951, for example, Révai launched a campaign against "schematism" in Hungarian literature, even though "the fight against schematism was passing entirely

would indeed be playing a central role in the new entity. Furthermore, it was claimed that Tito - Zhdanov's ally - was supporting the plans. Felix [McCargar], A Short Course in the Secret War, p. 206.

183. Gati, Hungary and the Soviet Bloc, p. 117. For more on the rebuke of the Hungarians, see below.

184. Váli, Rift and Revolt in Hungary, p. 93.

unnoticed in the Soviet Union."¹⁸⁵ Moscow's lack of interest in the campaign could well reflect the fact that with the triumph of the Malenkovites Révai had lost his prime Soviet patron. But Révai was not demoted until 1953, and managed to recover shortly thereafter, suggesting that someone in Moscow still backed him and his "left-wing" colleagues. And it is worth noting that in the wake of the Soviet defeat of the 1956 Revolution, Révai returned to Hungary and began publishing a weekly pro-Soviet magazine that did not go out of its way to support Kádár.¹⁸⁶ Kádár was not able to close down Révai's operation until the end of 1957, and he probably finally succeeded in doing so only because Khrushchev's opponents had in the meantime been removed from power in the Soviet Union.

Whatever the links that Gerő, Révai, or other top Hungarian leaders in the pre-1949 period may have had with the Zhdanovites, the most important repositories of power in Hungary at the time were still the Red Army, the NKVD (known as the MVD after 1946, then the KGB after 1954), and the NKVD's Hungarian subsidiary, the AVO. Neither Rákosi, Gerő, nor Révai could have remained for long in Party leadership posts without supporters somewhere in the upper echelons of the Soviet secret police, though Beria himself may well have been antagonistic to Rákosi. Beria, as was mentioned, seems to have joined together with Malenkov into a factional alliance against Zhdanov, with interesting policy

185. Aczél and Méray, The Revolt of the Mind, p. 91.

186. Váli, Rift and Revolt in Hungary, pp. 407-408.

implications in Hungary: even as AVO thugs pushed for a green light to crush the country's anti-Communist parties, top Soviet officials in Hungary were wrestling with the (Malenkovite) prospect that Soviet forces might have to withdraw altogether.¹⁸⁷ As late as the end of 1946 Marshal Voroshilov warned his staff that the Soviet Army should be prepared to evacuate Hungary on short notice. Voroshilov reportedly said that "Hungary will be a bourgeois democracy and therefore it is necessary to make important preparations."¹⁸⁸ Zoltán Vas, like Rákosi a veteran of Horthy's jails, and after 1945 the Communist chief of economic affairs in Hungary, wrote that even in 1946 the Communist leadership in Hungary was unsure whether "Stalin might not let Hungary come under the political influence of the [Western] allies in exchange for Soviet demands on Poland and Germany."¹⁸⁹ Not until the founding session of the Cominform, when the supremacy of the Zhdanovite line was established, was the Hungarian leadership given a Soviet guarantee that there would be no pullout. Though the Hungarians were then rebuked for having

187. It was not unprecedented that an assertive internal policy within a Communist state (or movement) should coincide with a cautious foreign policy. Between 1935 and 1938, for instance, Stalin called for cooperation with Western "bourgeois" parties, even while moving in brutal fashion to liquidate his (alleged) internal opposition.

188. This is according to Tibor Szamuely, who was one of the Hungarian secret police officers who worked directly for Voroshilov. Szamuely later related Voroshilov's views of 1946 to the historian Péter Gosztony. Cited in Gati, Hungary and the Soviet Bloc, p. 118.

189. Vas made this statement in the uncensored (and in most cases inaccessible) version of his memoirs, which Charles Gati was able to examine. Ibid.

failed to move more quickly against their non-Communist opponents, they could well have pointed to a greater resolve on their own part than had been demonstrated by certain of their Soviet overlords (but Malenkov was humiliated enough at Szklarska Poreba not to need condemnations from Révai). If any of the HCP leadership was still swayed by the Malenkovite thesis, convincing evidence of Stalin's resolve followed quickly - a successful coup d'etat in Prague, Soviet pressure against West Berlin (effectively shoring up the Communist leadership in what was about to become the GDR), and the announcement of the successful Russian explosion of an atomic bomb. Nevertheless, Moscow's pledge to defend Communism in Hungary would not be put to the test until nine years later, when Khrushchev would waver and consider a withdrawal.

While various Soviet strategists were contemplating how long the Red Army could realistically hope to hold on to Hungary, the AVO was doing its best to wipe out whatever organized opposition to Communism continued to survive there. Gábor Péter, the Chief of the AVO, though now charged with establishing a climate conducive to Communist rule within Hungary, was no stranger to the "international struggle against imperialism." In fact, even if Péter's campaign of terror and intimidation in Hungary had failed in its mission of facilitating the Communist takeover, Péter still would have to be counted today among the heroes of the Communist cause. In the 1930s, already a high ranking member of the Hungarian Communist Party, Péter had worked in Vienna as an agent of the OGPU, using various methods to recruit Austrians,

Hungarians, and others into the Communist ranks. One of Péter's recruits was none other than Litzi Friedman, who in turn, "sleeping for world history," lured Kim Philby into the service of Communism.¹⁹⁰ When Péter assumed power in Hungary in 1945 he did so as a top agent of the NKVD, and it was therefore Lavrenti Beria, not Mátyás Rákosi, to whom he was accountable.

It is not clear, however, whether Péter reported directly to Beria, to Viktor Abakumov or to some other of Beria's top lieutenants, or to General Fyodor Bielkin, chief of NKVD forces in Eastern Europe. According to one view, Bielkin reported to Beria through Abakumov, but otherwise had wide-ranging power to do in Hungary as he saw fit.¹⁹¹ Other accounts contend that Bielkin may actually have been Abakumov, working in Eastern Europe under a pseudonym.¹⁹² What is known for certain is that Bielkin, whose headquarters were in Austria, took more than just a close interest in Hungarian affairs, arrogating to himself the title of "Regent," which Horthy had formerly held. After 1948, while Malenkov and Beria collaborated in the elimination of

190. Háý, Born 1900, p. 127. See also Bruce Page, David Leitch, and Phillip Knightley, The Philby Conspiracy (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968), p. 57. Karl Friedman, Litzi's first husband, described Péter as "a real Stalinist, a tough, ruthless, and professional operator." For Philby's highly damaging efforts against the CIA and MI6 on behalf of Soviet intelligence, see Chapter 3.

191. Fehér and Heller, Hungary Revisited, p. 39.

192. Irving, Uprising!, p. 68, Kopácsi, In the Name of the Working Class, p. 239. This seems to have been commonly rumored in the Hungarian government at the time.

Zhdanov's supporters in the Soviet Union,¹⁹³ Bielkin moved to bring about the arrests and trials of Tito's supporters throughout Eastern Europe. The campaign against alleged Titoists grew all the more shrill and violent when it became apparent that Tito's regime was not going to be toppled. Although Malenkov had won the battle to be Stalin's Number Two (at least for the time being), neither he nor Beria could tolerate the thought that Tito's supporters might remain in positions of importance in the NKVD-dominated "People's Democracies." With approval from Stalin, Malenkov and his adherents launched a series of purges in Eastern Europe designed to eliminate genuine or potential supporters of Tito and to intimidate the rest of the Party cadres in the satellites. Accordingly, Bielkin worked with Gábor Péter to engineer the arrest and show trial of László Rajk in 1949, visiting Hungarian prisons to oversee the questioning and beating of prisoners and even on occasion personally helping out in the interrogations.¹⁹⁴ Bielkin was also responsible for orchestrating

193. Aleksei Kuznetsov, for example, one of Zhdanov's men in Beria's apparatus, was lured to Malenkov's office in order that he could be safely arrested. He was executed in February 1949. Deriabin, Watchdogs of Terror, p. 312.

194. Szász, Volunteers for the Gallows, pp. 138-39. As the Hungarian Chargé d'Affaires to the United States in the 1960s would later write, "It was an open secret that ... General Belkin of the Soviet Secret Police had personally conducted the interrogation of László Rajk." See János Radványi, Hungary and the Superpowers (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1972), p. 169.

The contention that Bielkin played such a direct role in the purges in Hungary is contested in some sources. According to George Heltai, the lion's share of the arrests in Hungary took place at the insistence of Rákosi, who wanted to make the most of the opportunity to do away with his internal enemies, while Bielkin urged the AVH to employ

the trials of Koci Xoxe in Albania (Tito's most important supporter there), Traicho Kostov in Bulgaria, and Rudolf Slansky in Czechoslovakia.¹⁹⁵ When Czech President Klement Gottwald balked at giving the order to arrest Party First Secretary Slansky, Rákosi was compelled to send a letter to Gottwald threatening that unless Slansky were promptly removed from power, Prague would be denounced at the next Hungarian Party Congress as the "Center of Western intelligence" in Eastern Europe.¹⁹⁶ The purges served their purpose well: by 1951, even though the campaign against Belgrade had failed, no East European leader

some restraint. See Heltai's interview with the author, Appendix F.

195. The role of Soviet representatives in the Czech purges has been spelled out by the Czech historian Karel Kaplan, who sat on the special Party Commission set up in 1968 to investigate the trials of the 1950s:

Soviet advisers ... wielded immense power, in fact far greater power than those whom they were supposed to advise, and yet they were not accountable to the Czechoslovak authorities. ... They approved the line of investigations, interrogation plans and records, they recommended the composition of the groups of those to be tried as well as the names of the trials, the content and at times the final indictment. In brief, the security service had to operate under their supervision and in accordance with their instructions.

Karel Kaplan, Political Persecution in Czechoslovakia, 1948-1972 (Cologne: Research Project, Crises in Soviet-Type Systems, 1983), p. 17. See the author's interview with Béla Király, Appendix I, and Szász, Volunteers for the Gallows, for the role of Soviet advisors in Hungary in the same period.

196. Jan Sejna, interview with the Oral History Project, International Security Studies Program, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. Conducted in Washington, DC, July 1985.

could dare try to emulate Tito or consider drawing close to Yugoslavia.

Throughout this period, Malenkov's expert on Hungary remained the Hungarian-born economist, Evgeniy Varga. During World War II, it had been Varga who, while serving as an economic advisor to Stalin, had acted as a protector of sorts for certain of the Hungarian Communist expatriates in Moscow. When Ulbricht accused György Lukács and other Hungarian exiles of damaging the international movement, Varga saw to it that Ulbricht was reprimanded.¹⁹⁷ By 1949 it had become clear that several aspects of Varga's thesis - that the world correlation of forces did not favor a forward international Communist policy - had been borne out by events. In particular, the United States had demonstrated, through the Marshall Plan, the Truman Doctrine, and the establishment of NATO, its commitment to stemming the further spread of Communism. Though from the perspective of the Kremlin it therefore could not be excluded that the Americans would work next to overthrow the satellite regimes altogether, even the Malenkovite group was now determined to consolidate the Communists' hold on Eastern Europe. If American pressure were to have confronted Stalin with the need to consider a withdrawal from parts of the glacis, then the Malenkovites might have advised caution or even compliance. But in general, compellent-style US demands against Moscow represented a contingency which the Malenkovites were prepared to deal with only at such time as

197. Háý, Born 1900, p. 211.

it should in fact arise (though in 1953 Beria and Malenkov might have been thinking along precisely such lines).¹⁹⁸ Between 1949 and 1953, Varga made frequent trips from Moscow to Budapest, presumably to keep Rákosi in line. During the summer of 1950, for example, Varga was reported by officials of the US Legation in Budapest to have become practically the "Soviet economic gauleiter" in Hungary. Gerő, Minister Nathaniel Davis reported, was taking his orders directly from Varga.¹⁹⁹ And in September 1951, Varga flew to Budapest during a period in which Rákosi had not been seen publicly for several weeks.²⁰⁰ There were rumors in Hungary at the time that Varga had been sent to oversee a reorganization of the Party leadership, and although those rumors turned out to be untrue they were a proper reflection of Varga's important role.

Within Hungary, Malenkov's favorite was Imre Nagy. Reflecting to a large extent Varga's views, Nagy had cautioned against industrializing the country too quickly and had opposed forced collectivization of agriculture. Although like the

198. In reality, of course, the United States did very little in this period to challenge Communist rule in Eastern Europe, other than an aborted effort to overthrow the government of Albania. See Chapter 3.

199. Department of State Telegram, from Budapest to Washington, no. 68 of August 1950 (each American diplomatic post numbered its cables from the start of each year or month); National Archives, Washington, DC; Central Decimal File, 764.00/8-1650. Henceforth form of citation: USBudapest 68, August 16, 1950. Archives 764.00/8-1650. Davis reported further that, in a nice touch, Varga had taken over László Rajk's house in Budapest as his Hungarian residence.

200. The New York Times, September 20, 1951, p. 12.

leading Hungarian Communist "Foursome," Nagy was a fellow Muscovite, he never got along well with Rákosi, Gerő, Révai, or Farkas. Révai, for instance, frequently attacked Nagy within Party circles for adhering to "rightist views," and in 1948 even accused Nagy in a Soviet publication of "Bukharinism."²⁰¹ Although Nagy was expelled from the Hungarian Politburo in August 1949 (precisely at the outset of the purges, when demotion in the Party almost automatically was followed by one's arrest), no further steps were taken against him. Then in December 1950 Nagy was appointed head of a minor Ministry, and in February 1951, even as thousands of Hungarian officials who had crossed swords with Rákosi or one of his minions were being imprisoned, Nagy was actually restored to Politburo membership. It is highly unlikely that Nagy could have been rehabilitated so quickly and in such a climate had it not been for a patron in the Kremlin, and in this regard it is surely no coincidence that Nagy's promotions in 1950 and 1951 closely paralleled Malenkov's ascendancy in the Soviet Union.²⁰²

The bloody course of the purges in Eastern Europe, meanwhile, was closely influenced by divisions within the Soviet security organs themselves. MVD Chief Beria, increasingly apprehensive that the next purge would be directed against him, was reputed to be intensely suspicious of his top deputy, Viktor

201. Aczél and Méray, The Revolt of the Mind, p. 212.

202. Zinner, Revolution in Hungary, p. 147. It is probably also significant that the Ministry which Nagy was awarded late in 1950, Crop Collections, was in precisely the area in which he had been criticizing the Rákosi regime.

Abakumov, in large measure because Abakumov had a better rapport with Stalin than he did.²⁰³ Other factors fueling Beria's resentment of his subordinate were Abakumov's own close ties to the power structure in Eastern Europe and the fact that Abakumov had been responsible for the probe into Zhdanov's death - an investigation which could hardly work to Beria's benefit. In Hungary, AVH Chief Gábor Péter was closely aware of the anti-Semitic nature of the Slansky case and came to the proper conclusion that either he or Rákosi would probably be the next to be arrested. Péter therefore took steps to try to undermine Rákosi, reporting to Beria allegations against Rákosi sufficient in Péter's mind to effectively compromise the First Secretary's position. Abakumov, however, informed Rákosi of Péter's reports.²⁰⁴ The information doubtless confirmed Rákosi's own suspicions of his AVH Chief, and eventually Rákosi gave the order to have Péter arrested, perhaps also anticipating that Stalin was about to liquidate Beria. But Beria proved able to outmaneuver Abakumov and his other many opponents, and was still in full control of the Soviet security organs in March 1953.²⁰⁵ In all

203. See the interview with Ilya Dzhirkvelov, the Oral History Project, International Security Studies Program, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy; London, September 1985. Dzhirkvelov spent over thirty years in the KGB and its predecessors before defecting to the West.

204. Váli, Rift and Revolt in Hungary, p. 68.

205. Abakumov disappeared late in 1951. According to Boris Nicolaevsky, Stalin himself had been supporting Beria's adversaries (though apparently not decisively enough). For instance, A. N. Poskrebyshev, the head of Stalin's personal Secretariat, engineered the promotion of Semyon Ignatiev as Abakumov's replacement, and Ignatiev made it his main order

likelihood, Beria was just about to try to engineer Rákosi's ouster when Stalin's sudden death forced Beria to redirect his energies toward the ensuing power struggle in the Kremlin.

The Kremlin and Hungary: From New Course to Revolution

The new collective leadership in Moscow now faced the challenge of retaining Soviet control over the satellites at a time when there was no longer any dominant figure in the Kremlin. With Malenkov as Premier, Khrushchev as General Secretary, and Stalin's close advisor Vyacheslav Molotov as Foreign Minister, power among the Soviet leaders was effectively diffused.²⁰⁶ In Eastern Europe, Stalin's death led to renewed tension between the governments and the population, as the staying power of the unwanted Communist regimes was drawn into question. The new restlessness was particularly acute in Czechoslovakia, where Gottwald had died after attending Stalin's funeral. A workers' rebellion broke out at Pilsen in the beginning of June, and there

of business to undermine Beria. See Boris I. Nicolaevsky, "The Party Men and the Managers," The New Leader 40 (no. 30, July 29, 1957): p. 10., and Nicolaevsky, Power and the Soviet Elite: "The Letter of an Old Bolshevik" and Other Essays (New York: Praeger, 1966), p. 194.

206. Molotov's relationship with Stalin was never as close as that of Poskrebyshev, but Poskrebyshev did not sit on the Politburo and was literally nothing more than Stalin's right hand. Following Stalin's death, such a background was no asset, and Poskrebyshev disappeared from sight immediately (it is a reasonable assumption that he was liquidated, at the orders conceivably of any - or of all - of Stalin's successors). Molotov himself appears to have come under Stalin's suspicions during the dictator's last years; indeed Molotov's wife was sent off to Siberia. Nevertheless, Molotov remained the Soviet figure whose career was associated the longest and the most closely with Stalin's.

were riots in a few outlying villages in Hungary as well. In the wake of these events, and acting in any case upon Malenkov's direction (for the time being he remained Primus Inter Pares), the Soviet Politburo summoned the Hungarian leadership to the Kremlin on June 13. At the unexpected summit the Hungarians were reminded just who was calling the shots in Eastern Europe, and Rákosi in particular was castigated for his inept rule. Malenkov, Khrushchev, and Molotov all roundly criticized the Hungarian First Secretary, but none more so than Beria:

Listen to me, Rákosi, ... we know that there have been in Hungary, apart from its own rulers, Turkish sultans, Hapsburg emperors, Tartar kings, and Polish princes. But, as far as we know, Hungary has never had a Jewish king. Apparently that is what you have become. Well, you can be sure that we won't allow it.²⁰⁷

Rákosi was told that he would have to yield the position of Premier to Imre Nagy, a move patterned after the Soviet precedent of splitting the Government post from the top Party post.²⁰⁸ Naturally Rákosi had no choice but to agree to relinquish the Premiership, but he objected to the idea that Nagy should get the position. Nagy, he cautioned (and he clearly had one of his own favorites in mind for Premier), was not "close enough to the Soviet Union" to do the job well. But Beria responded,

207. Quoted in Aczél and Méray, The Revolt of the Mind, p. 159. According to Robert Conquest, Beria first greeted Rákosi with the question, "Are you still in charge of Hungary?" and then pulled Rákosi's tie tight around his neck, leaving Rákosi half choked. The symbolism needed little explaining. See Conquest, "Lenin's Guffaw," The New Republic 195 (September 15 & 22, 1986): p. 19.

208. Of course Malenkov originally had held both positions, and might have kept them longer had his own ineptitude not left his opponents an opening. See above.

significantly, "That is something we know much better than you."²⁰⁹ When the Hungarians returned to Budapest, Rákosi worked feverishly to undermine his new Premier, and a two year period of competition for power between Rákosi and Nagy was underway.

Only a few days after the Soviet-Hungarian conference, riots broke out in the Soviet sector of Berlin, and Soviet military force was required in order to suppress the uprising. Shortly thereafter Beria was arrested in Moscow, a move that in time would weaken Malenkov's position. Perhaps the only point upon which all the Politburo members agreed was the need to rein in the secret police, although it is striking that Malenkov was willing to take the risk of liquidating his factional ally. Apparently it was feared that Beria was preparing some sort of coup d'etat against the others, using the extensive security forces which he had at his disposal.²¹⁰ For help in overthrowing

209. George Heltai, interview with the author, Appendix F. Imre Nagy later recounted the whole Moscow episode to Heltai.

210. This reasoning was apparently the gist of a secret memorandum which the leadership seems to have sent out to senior Party officials to explain Beria's arrest. See Schapiro, The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, p. 560. Of course, the memorandum may have been nothing more than an ex post facto explanation. It seems to me, however, that only a discovery on the part of the Politburo members that an MGB coup against all of them was imminent could have led to Malenkov's role in Beria's arrest. Short of that, Malenkov's participation (he surely could have called off the move, had he desired) is difficult to understand.

The Soviet leadership was quick to blame Beria for the Berlin uprising (and for all other past troubles in Eastern Europe as well), but there is good reason to believe that rather than having encouraged Ulbricht to crack down, Beria (and Malenkov) had actually favored some sort of rapprochement with the West on Germany. Additionally, Beria, and perhaps Malenkov as well, had apparently been backing Wilhelm Zaisser, the East German Security Chief,

Beria, the Politburo leadership turned to the armed forces: General K. S. Moskalenko, whom Khrushchev had worked with in the Ukraine and who was later made Marshal and commander of the Soviet Strategic Missile Forces, is reported to have kept Beria under guard while his supporters were disarmed and rounded up.²¹¹ In the few days before and after Beria's arrest (announced July 10 but in fact having taken place earlier), Moscow stood on the brink of civil war, as secret police and army forces awaited orders to move against the other. Officials in the MGB's Second Chief Directorate, for example, were issued guns and ammunition and told to be prepared to fight, though they were not told the reason (or the enemy). But the army generals who ran the operation against Beria and his backers were careful to avoid using the radio or otherwise to tip Beria off, and his forces were never able to enter the fray.²¹² Within a short time of Beria's defeat, Marshal Georgi Zhukov, who had played a key role in the whole affair, was made a member of the CPSU Central

against Ulbricht. See Fehér and Heller, Hungary Revisited, pp. 70-71. The majority of the Soviet Politburo after Stalin's death had no factional reason to back Ulbricht, but subsequently saw no need to bring about a regime change in Berlin in the direction of détente with the West, given the fact that the United States had made no effort to take advantage of the Berlin uprising to bring pressure to bear against Moscow.

211. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, pp. 336-338. I would caution, however, that there is no certainty that Khrushchev did not compile these "memoirs" under KGB duress.
212. See the testimony of Ilya Dzhirkvelov in the Oral History Project, International Security Studies Program, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy; London, September 1985.

Committee, and in February 1956 he was promoted to Candidate membership in the Politburo.

Following Beria's liquidation, the Soviet leadership took several steps to return the security organs squarely to Party control. Command of internal army forces was transferred from an MVD (Interior Ministry) General to an Army General, while the ranks of top Marshals and Admirals were rapidly increased. In addition, a massive replacement of personnel was carried out in both the Soviet and bloc services, as mid-level cadres as well as top officials were dismissed.²¹³ According to reports that came to light during the "Prague Spring" of 1968, Beria's security officers were replaced throughout Eastern Europe in 1953 and 1954, with the two operatives in charge of Czech affairs executed upon their return to Moscow.²¹⁴ The same fate may well have befallen Beria's men in Hungary and elsewhere. It was widely

213. The combined effect was to reduce somewhat the growing power of the security organs over the military, a trend which had begun with Lenin but reached its apex during the KGB's "Smersh" operations during World War II. See Yosef Avidar, The Party and the Army in the Soviet Union (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State Press, 1973), p. 53. In Avidar's view, the Politburo's reliance upon the Army to fend off Beria made the Army an almost independent political force which, to a far greater extent than had previously been the case, successive General Secretaries would have to court.

214. Karel Kaplan, "Thoughts on the Political Trials," Nova Mysl, July 6, 1968. Cited in Michael Fry and Condolezza Rice, "The Hungarian Crisis of 1956: The Soviet Decision," Studies in Comparative Communism 16 (no. 1-2, Spring/Summer 1983): p. 90. Similarly, ten prominent North Korean Communists were shot in August 1953, allegedly as "American agents," when (at least according to one view) they were in fact Beria's followers in Korea. See Nicolaevsky, "Four Years of Struggle Inside the Kremlin," The New Leader 39 (no. 48, November 26, 1956): p. 9.

rumored in Hungary, for example, that Fyodor Bielkin, the Soviet official most directly responsible for orchestrating the Hungarian show trials and at one point Hungary's self-declared "Regent," had been recalled to the Soviet Union and executed following the uprising in East Berlin and Beria's arrest.²¹⁵ Meanwhile many of the (still living) victims of the AVO began to be released from prison, including eventually János Kádár.

The security services were reorganized in 1954 into the KGB (Committee for State Security), and General Ivan Serov, a career security apparatchik of the bloodiest type, was put at the top. As one of Poskrebyshev's top deputies in the 1930s, Serov was reported to have played an important part in the execution of Marshal Tukhachevsky and his colleagues, and helped lead the Smersh operations against "unreliable" Soviet military units during the war.²¹⁶ Serov's appointment in 1954 therefore may have represented, at least in part, a warning to the Army that despite the military's important role in 1953, the Party was prepared to purge the Army again should it prove necessary. At the same time, the promotion of Serov should also be seen as a reflection of the strength of Serov's main patron on the Politburo, seemingly Khrushchev. During the war Serov had served as Beria's subordinate in charge of the deportations of East Europeans, refugees, and Asiatic and Turkic ethnic groups from the Ukraine, and while working there he developed close ties to

215. Szász, Volunteers for the Gallows, p. 142.

216. Nicolaevsky, Power and the Soviet Elite, pp. 195-196.

Khrushchev.²¹⁷ The link between Serov and Khrushchev seems to have been important enough in Khrushchev's mind that Serov's background as Beria's deputy was not held against him.²¹⁸

But whatever Khrushchev's links with the security apparatus, the other members of the Soviet leadership (and Khrushchev himself as well) were not going to allow the KGB the power of its predecessor, so that the influence of the KGB during the Hungarian Revolution was not as great as it might have been had the same series of events occurred during Stalin's lifetime. Moreover, under Serov the KGB excelled far more in deportations, counter-guerrilla operations, and assassinations (such as against the Ukrainian resistance) than in intelligence gathering abroad. The vacillating reaction of the Soviet leadership to the events in Eastern Europe in 1956 may well have stemmed as much from faulty (or falsely reassuring) information from Soviet "Advisors" and Rezidentura operatives in the satellites as from splits in the Politburo in Moscow. In 1954, in an effort to tighten up the Politburo's control over foreign affairs - and in a successful

217. Ronald Hingley, The Russian Secret Police: Muscovite, Imperial Russian and Soviet Political Security Operations, 1565 - 1970 (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1970), p. 225. Serov was reported by Polish émigrés to have played an important role in the massacre of Polish officers at Katyn, a task which he presumably had little trouble stomaching. See William R. Corson and Robert T. Crowley, The New KGB: Engine of Soviet Power (New York: William Murrow & Co., 1985), p. 432.

218. Khrushchev calls Serov "an honest man" whom he trusted, despite "dubious things about him." Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, p. 338. One wonders exactly which of Serov's various exploits constituted dubiousness and which were just par for the course.

move by Khrushchev against Molotov - a new requirement was established that Soviet Ambassadors to bloc countries could no longer be career diplomats; instead they would be appointed from among the ranks of Party functionaries, in many cases Central Committee members.²¹⁹ Because Yuri Andropov later acceded to the position of Chief of the KGB, there is reason to speculate that even while Ambassador to Hungary he may already have been working for the security service, although there is no definitive proof of this. Andropov may have reported straight to the Party Secretariat or Politburo (like the other Soviet ambassadors in the bloc) and simultaneously have reported to Serov as well, or perhaps have reached Khrushchev only through Serov.²²⁰ But the Politburo did not have to rely exclusively on its embassies and rezidenturas for information, since the Red Army and Military

219. This was obviously instrumental in affording the Party Secretaries greater leverage in getting their own people into the important foreign slots. In 1956, the Soviet ambassadors to China, Czechoslovakia, and Poland were Central Committee members, while the ambassador to Romania was a Candidate member. By contrast, no ambassadors to Western countries were Central Committee members, and only the ambassadors to the United States, Great Britain, and West Germany were Candidates. The Soviet ambassador to Hungary at the time, Yuri Andropov, was neither a Member nor a Candidate. See the listing, "Central Committee - Twentieth Party Congress," Radio Free Europe Background Report, February 26, 1956.

220. Fry and Rice, "The Hungarian Crisis of 1956," p. 91., feel that Andropov's primary function was simply to notify the Politburo of changes in the Hungarian government and that he probably reported independently of Serov. According to János Radványi, who held a series of top posts within the Hungarian Foreign Ministry prior to his defection to the United States, Andropov was not working for the KGB in 1956, although he had close links with many officials in the security organs dating from World War II. See Radványi's interview with the author, Appendix N.

Intelligence officers in the bloc kept their superiors in Moscow informed on developments in the morale and mood of the local armies and population (the case of Marshal Rokossovsky in Poland being a good, if unusual, example).

Within the Kremlin from 1953 to 1955, the struggle for power centered around Malenkov and Khrushchev. For the most part the Soviet military threw its support behind Khrushchev, not only because several generals (notably I. S. Konev, V. I. Chuikov, and Moskalenko) had served with Khrushchev in the Ukraine, but also because Malenkov's position in favor of consumer goods was portrayed by his adversaries as detrimental to the military, while Malenkov's view that nuclear war would wipe out the gains of socialism along with capitalism was rejected in military circles as unnecessarily pessimistic.²²¹ Marshals Konev and Zhukov do not seem to have been on the best of terms, but shared a preference for Khrushchev over his rivals. Khrushchev's alliance with Zhukov and the military reached its climax in 1957, when Zhukov's alert airlift of Khrushchev's backers to Moscow enabled Khrushchev to reverse in the Central Committee the vote engineered by Malenkov and Molotov against him in the Politburo. Khrushchev "rewarded" Zhukov shortly thereafter by dismissing him altogether.

Khrushchev succeeded in having Malenkov replaced as Chairman of the Council of Ministers (that is, Premier) by Nikolai

221. Conquest, Power and Policy in the USSR, pp. 333-334. For the role of the Soviet military during the Hungarian Revolution, see Chapter 5 of this study.

Bulganin in February 1955, but at the time Khrushchev was not yet strong enough to oust his rival altogether. Alternatively, Khrushchev may not yet have desired the full ouster of Malenkov, since the removal of Malenkov and his followers M. Z. Saburov and M. G. Pervukhin would have left Khrushchev and his partner Bulganin in a minority position relative to the veterans Molotov and Kaganovich, with Voroshilov probably giving his support.²²² Molotov, for his part, bided his time, remaining on the sidelines during the debates between Khrushchev and Malenkov on consumer goods/heavy industry and on the nature of war in a nuclear age, while Malenkov and Khrushchev made no effort to try to come together against Molotov. Molotov's chief difficulty stemmed from the fact that he did not have a substantial base of followers within the Party, although many leaders of the entrenched regimes in Eastern Europe looked to him for support. His power had been largely a function of Stalin's patronage and of the longstanding relationship between the two. With the death of Stalin, Molotov was compelled to define a new position in an atmosphere in which retreat from Stalinism was the byword, and this proved difficult. Molotov found that he would have to be nimble just to maintain the power he already held and that the shaping of policy would remain an effort in collaboration.

In the months after February 1955, Khrushchev, having dislodged Malenkov from effective control over state policy, now

222. See Chapter 3, "Internal Struggles and Soviet Foreign Policy" in Uri Ra'anan, The USSR Arms the Third World: Case Studies of Soviet Foreign Policy (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969)

picked up the "banner of the fallen" and adopted much of the policy toward Eastern Europe which had characterized Malenkov's New Course. But in an effort apparently calculated to isolate Molotov and Kaganovich, Khrushchev went much further than had Malenkov in reversing Stalin's satellite policies, particularly with respect to Yugoslavia. In large part, Khrushchev's strategy seems to have been to use a daring opening to Tito and the reformers within the bloc's Communist parties as a means of wooing Anastas Mikoyan, as well as Saburov and Pervukhin, away from Malenkov. In so doing Khrushchev may have hoped to gain enough strength to deal with both Molotov and Malenkov at once. Khrushchev's journey to Yugoslavia in May 1955 was wholly opposed by Molotov, who declared at the July plenum that while state-to-state relations with Belgrade were not inappropriate (and as Foreign Minister, he would have a greater say) the resumption of Party relations conferred upon Tito a status which he did not deserve.²²³ Significantly, Molotov was not part of the Soviet delegation, and neither was Malenkov, who of course had been instrumental in bringing about the Soviet break with Tito in the first place. Khrushchev's entourage included Bulganin, Mikoyan, and Shepilov, a Khrushchev supporter who would be elevated to the post of Foreign Minister in June 1956. Molotov responded by downplaying the achievements of the People's Democracies in their efforts to "build socialism," stressing that Soviet concessions to the bloc's reformers, whether for Tito's sake or on their own

223. Ibid., p. 90. Also Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc, p. 178.

merits, would be a mistake. Regarding Austria, Molotov was in no hurry to see a state treaty signed and feared the repercussions that a Soviet withdrawal might produce. Bulganin, acting on Khrushchev's behalf, countered that the East European states had made important strides toward socialism and would therefore not be negatively affected by a settlement in Austria.²²⁴

The effect on the Hungarian regime of the competition for power in Moscow between Khrushchev and Malenkov was much more pronounced than in the struggle between Zhdanov and Malenkov in the 1946-1948 period. Once Khrushchev had succeeded in demoting Malenkov from his post as Premier, Rákosi was able to oust Imre Nagy from the Hungarian Premiership. In the months following, as Malenkov proved unable to regain his earlier standing in the leadership, Nagy likewise could not recover. Khrushchev himself had no affinity or special ties to Rákosi, however, and his campaign against Stalin in the USSR and against the remnants of Stalinist influence in the satellites (a point of view which he was already arguing in closed discussions with bloc leaders) promised to undermine Rákosi's position. In addition, Khrushchev was coming under pressure from Tito to oust the Hungarian Party leadership: the Yugoslavs were demanding that Khrushchev give greater support to those East European Communists who enjoyed

224. Vojtech Mastny, "Kremlin Politics and the Austrian Settlement," Problems of Communism 31 (no. 4, July-August 1982): p. 48. Molotov's allusions in his speech of February 8, 1955, in favor of an Austrian treaty do not appear to have been his own preference, but were more likely insertions made by others into the text. See Uri Ra'anán, The USSR Arms the Third World, p. 105.

some degree of nationalist credibility, and it is possible that Khrushchev's desire to improve ties with Belgrade led him to pressure Rákosi (even after the dismissal of Nagy) to continue to release Hungary's political prisoners. Molotov, Kaganovich, and Voroshilov (who may actually have carried some weight on this issue, since it was he who had overseen the consolidation of Communist power in Hungary in the first place) were probably Rákosi's only backers in the Kremlin, and none of them was in a very strong position. Still, so long as Rákosi was able to keep the lid on dissent in Hungary, Khrushchev seemed unwilling to demand any major leadership changes in Budapest. Only Khrushchev's attack on Stalin in February 1956, though aimed foremost at Khrushchev's opponents within the Kremlin, finally made Rákosi's rule untenable.

In the period between the replacement of Malenkov by Bulganin as Premier (a position which Molotov may well have expected himself) and the Hungarian Revolution, two new members were voted into the Politburo, A. I. Kirichenko and Mikhail Suslov. Kirichenko was a Khrushchev supporter, who had served in the Ukrainian Party apparatus during Khrushchev's tenure as Ukrainian Party Secretary and who then succeeded Khrushchev in that post. Kirichenko's elevation to Politburo level helped strengthen Khrushchev's hand, although the fact that Khrushchev was able to bring one of his proteges on board says something in itself about his power at the time. However, it seems unlikely that the elevation of Suslov came at Khrushchev's urging, since Suslov's background colored him as closer to Malenkov or Molotov.

Suslov had been serving as the head of the Department of Agitation and Propaganda of the Central Committee and as Party Secretary for ideology and relations with the People's Democracies.²²⁵ Not only did Suslov therefore already have extensive experience with the states of the "socialist camp," but he apparently had also been quite active in the denunciation of Tito carried out by the (Malenkovite-dominated) Cominform in 1948 and 1949. Moreover, like Molotov, Suslov was opposed to the rapprochement with the Yugoslavs in 1955. According (allegedly) to Khrushchev, Suslov "was particularly adamant in resisting the idea of trying to relieve the tension between us and the Yugoslavs. He insisted that Yugoslavia was no longer a Socialist country."²²⁶ In many ways, the same description could just as easily have been applied to Molotov.

During the Hungarian crisis of 1956, Suslov was joined with Mikoyan as an emissary from Moscow, leading one at first to suspect that the two men may have been of similar orientation. But what seems much more likely is that they represented opposing factions within the Kremlin and were paired together as a way of ensuring both that reliable and reasonably objective information reached all sides in the Politburo and that instructions from the Kremlin were not reinterpreted before being delivered to the

225. Elizabeth Teague, "The Foreign Departments of the Central Committee of the CPSU," Radio Liberty Research Bulletin, October 27, 1980.

226. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, p. 377. For Suslov's prominent role in the Cominform's expulsion of Yugoslavia, see Gavriel Ra'anan, International Policy Formation in the USSR, pp. 147, 164.

Hungarians. Indeed, this pairing of adherents to differing views was not uncommon in Soviet diplomacy, with the combination of Mikoyan and Suslov having already been established as a team well matched for missions in Eastern Europe.²²⁷ Mikoyan seems to have been alone among the remaining "Old Guard" in somewhat readily accommodating Khrushchev; although he tended to support Malenkov during the period before Bulganin's appointment as Premier, Mikoyan was nonetheless made Khrushchev's chief troubleshooter in Eastern Europe. But the fact that he was often accompanied by Suslov suggests that others in the Soviet Politburo (most likely Molotov and his backers) were still able to keep Khrushchev from getting a free hand. It was Kaganovich, for example, who led a Soviet delegation to Prague in May 1955, indicating that although the Molotov group was excluded from the delegation which visited Yugoslavia shortly thereafter, they were still a force to reckoned with in Soviet policy making.²²⁸

In the February 1956 Twentieth Party Congress of the CPSU, Khrushchev tried to undercut his opponents even further with an

227. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, p. 121., notes that Mikoyan and Suslov were considered "specialists of a sort for Hungary, because they have been there several times on various political missions." And Gerő's delegation met with Mikoyan and Suslov in Moscow in early October 1956. USBudapest 661.64/10-1056. Other examples of "pairing" include the makeup of the Soviet delegation to Warsaw on October 19, and the trip of Khrushchev and Malenkov to Brioni in the middle of the crisis in Hungary. See Chapter 5.

228. Conquest, Power and Policy in the USSR, p. 269. The Czech leadership, along with the Romanian, was the most vehement bloc opponent of Khrushchev's opening to Tito, and the Molotov group clearly did not hesitate to endorse them.

unprecedented attack against Stalin. Perhaps the most significant point to be made in connection with the Congress is that although Khrushchev clearly dominated the proceedings, he was unable to produce any tangible gains over his rivals. Malenkov was weakened but not ousted, and although Molotov was denounced by name in Pravda and replaced as Foreign Minister in July, he was likewise not removed from the Politburo. That the influence of Khrushchev's opponents was not eradicated can be seen from the Kremlin's policy toward Eastern Europe, where Khrushchev maintained the initiative but chose not to try to dislodge the bloc's leading Stalinists. Even though Molotov no longer controlled the Soviet ambassadors in Eastern Europe (and although Shepilov, his successor as Foreign Minister, was a close supporter of Khrushchev), the Soviet representatives in Berlin, Prague, Budapest, and Bucharest made no effort to overturn the regimes there in the wake of the Party Congress in Moscow. True, Rákosi was finally removed, but only after the Hungarian Party had nearly collapsed and major riots had broken out in Poland - and even then not before the Molotov group did their best to prevent it. In most accounts of the Hungarian Revolution, Mikoyan's mission to Budapest in July is properly cited as an indication of Khrushchev's sway, but what is often overlooked is that Suslov was in Hungary only one month earlier.²²⁹ While there, not only did he not stress that the Hungarian Party leadership had lost control over events, but he recommended

229. The New York Times, June 8, 1956, p. 9.

giving Rákosi full support. "By all accounts," Micunovic observed, "Suslov did his best to deepen and sharpen the crisis, instead of reducing it and making a better solution possible."²³⁰

This episode suggests many points. First, it is noteworthy that Suslov and not Mikoyan was given first crack at the situation on the ground in Hungary. While Molotov did not hold the upper hand in Moscow, he was apparently persuasive enough - and Khrushchev by this point sufficiently unsure of himself - to play up the dangers involved in "rocking the boat" with a satellite leadership change. Malenkov and others may well have shared this view, reluctant to withdraw Rákosi for fear of what might follow. Nonetheless, Suslov, however much he may have tried to shore up support for Rákosi in Budapest, was not able to carry the day with his colleagues in the Kremlin, for within a few weeks of his return to Moscow, Mikoyan was sent off to Hungary with orders to remove Rákosi. In deciding at last to replace the Hungarian First Secretary, Khrushchev seems to have rejected the arguments of Molotov, Suslov, and Voroshilov in favor of information which differed from Suslov's account that he was getting from other sources, including Andropov and the Yugoslavs. Still, the reversal in Khrushchev's policy toward Hungary between June and July 1956 should not be considered the harsh rebuff to the Molotov group which at first it would appear to be. The very fact that it was Ernő Gerő who was installed as the new Hungarian leader, and not a more apparent Khrushchev

230. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, pp. 87-88.

supporter, such as Kádár, strongly suggests that Khrushchev was still constrained in important ways by his adversaries in the Politburo.²³¹ Moreover, Suslov's absence from Budapest in July might not necessarily imply the opposition of Molotov and his group to the leadership change (which one might otherwise have thought). Rather, it is possible that Mikoyan was asked to carry out the installation of Gerő despite what may have been his own opposition to the decision, in order to remind the Hungarians that de-Stalinization within the Soviet Union did not mean that the Kremlin was ready to let things get out of hand in Eastern Europe. And Khrushchev's opponents were encouraged in the wake of the riots at Poznan, when Khrushchev began to waver from his earlier insistence on the need to extirpate Stalin's legacy from the Communist system. Through the summer of 1956 Khrushchev

231. According to Miklós Vásárhelyi, Mikoyan first offered the position to András Hegedüs, but Hegedüs turned him down. Only then did Mikoyan tap Gerő as the new First Secretary. See Vásárhelyi's interview with the author, Appendix R. Also George Urban, "'The People Are Coming!' A Remarkable Political Confession," Encounter 65 (no. 3, September-October 1985): p. 18.

During his visit Suslov seems to have paid a courtesy call to Imre Nagy on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday and to have spoken with Nagy for about three hours on another occasion (USBudapest Despatch 481, June 21, 1956. Archives 764.00/6-2156), prompting speculation that Suslov may have offered Nagy the Premiership - but only on the condition that he first exercise self-criticism (which, in the circumstances, he prudently refused to do, and Khrushchev must have expected as much). And Voroshilov was rumored to have growled at one point that Nagy was the only honest man in the whole Hungarian leadership (though he was actually not in the leadership at all and Voroshilov had never found honesty to be an important virtue in a Hungarian when he was running Hungary). See Gati, "Imre Nagy & Moscow," p. 38. With the exception of the Malenkov group, none of the Soviet leaders could have been too eager to turn power back over to Nagy.

seems to have been unsure of what he really wanted to see happen in the satellites, and apparently caved in to the Molotov faction, which insisted that reforming the system in Hungary was less important than keeping order there.²³²

In Poland, the emergence of Edward Ochab as First Secretary following the death of Boleslaw Bierut was a development that seems to have been acceptable to all sides in the Kremlin. The Polish leadership was even more divided than their Soviet counterparts, however, and when the Poles finally rejected the Stalinists and chose Gomulka, the Molotov group in Moscow apparently demanded that the selection be reversed. It was therefore Molotov and Kaganovich who joined Khrushchev and Mikoyan in the Soviet leadership's landmark trip to Warsaw on October 19. That Khrushchev made the trip reveals by itself the urgency with which the Kremlin was by now dealing with the events in Poland, while Molotov's presence was as clear a signal as could have been given that Moscow was contemplating the use of force to restore the status quo ante. Molotov, with his instrumental role in bringing about the 1939 Nazi-Soviet Pact and all that followed in Poland, was not one of the more beloved

232. Khrushchev was clearly reflecting the position of Molotov's group when he told Micunovic in July that "we have decided to use all means at our disposal to bring the crisis [in Hungary] to an end." Micunovic took the statement, properly, as a threat of force against Hungary (and Yugoslavia). Micunovic, Moscow Diary, p. 88. But Khrushchev's threat was only a bluff: when the Hungarian Revolution erupted in October, the Soviet leadership vacillated for over a week before deciding to crush the uprising, and in July they were even less prepared to intervene.

Russians ever to visit Warsaw, and Khrushchev was well aware of that. For this reason, Molotov's insistence that he be present in the talks with the Poles carried more weight at the time in Moscow than whatever reservations Khrushchev may have had. Again, Khrushchev seems to have been undecided as to how to proceed (in Warsaw he first blasted Gomulka in the coarsest of terms but then acquiesced), but found Molotov's presence to be useful to the extent that it would intimidate the Polish Party. Malenkov's absence from the delegation suggests that he probably stood somewhere between the Khrushchev and Molotov groups, sharing the concern that events in Poland were getting out of hand and assigning Khrushchev a large part of the blame. On the other hand, the fact that Malenkov did not make the trip to Warsaw might be attributed as well to his inability at the time to match the influence of Khrushchev or even of Molotov on the Politburo.

When the Hungarian Revolution broke out the next week, the Soviet leadership, as in the previous occasions in which it had needed to make quick decisions, was completely divided on how to react. In the end, Khrushchev and his colleagues made their decision in favor of intervention reluctantly and with substantial anxieties. In their calculations the Soviet leadership looked to many factors, of which the situation on the ground in Hungary was only one. Another was the unpredictable policy of the United States. To what extent, the overlords of Eastern Europe and the USSR asked themselves, were the Americans ready to back the Hungarians?

CHAPTER THREE:
UNITED STATES POLICY IN EASTERN EUROPE, 1944-1956

Acquiescence in Soviet Control

The strategy by which President Franklin D. Roosevelt waged World War II concentrated primarily on the military objective of defeating the Axis powers and much less on the political objective of securing at the same time an outcome to the war which would favor American and democratic interests in the postwar years.²³³ Nowhere was this truer than in Eastern Europe, where - to the extent that he gave the matter serious thought -

233. This rather critical assessment is the consensus view of many writers on the period. See, for example, Stephen Kertész: "Roosevelt's far-reaching decision was that military considerations should prevail during the period of hostilities and that political and territorial questions should be postponed to the peace conference." Stephen D. Kertész, Between Russia and the West: Hungary and the Illusions of Peacemaking, 1945-1947 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), p. 54. Or, in another analyst's words, "Political considerations affected the debates, but had a minor effect on their outcome. ... Roosevelt decided that the interests of the United States would best be served by letting the judgment of his military advisors prevail," Kent Roberts Greenfield, American Strategy in World War II: A Reconsideration (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1963), pp. 15-16. Cited in Bernard Brodie, War and Politics (New York: Macmillan, 1973), p. 40. William Griffith concurs: "Roosevelt, his generals, and indeed, most Americans ... concentrated on winning the war; what happened thereafter was to them much less important." William E. Griffith, Cold War and Coexistence: Russia, China, and the United States (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 32.

President Roosevelt expected the USSR and the US to cooperate after the war. When Winston Churchill argued in 1943 in favor of an Allied landing in Yugoslavia which, if successful, would have paved the way for a potential Anglo-American overland thrust toward Budapest, Vienna, and Prague, the President, with the support of the US Chiefs of Staff, dismissed the idea out of hand. Following the invasion of France in June 1944, Churchill suggested the Balkan route again, but Roosevelt brushed the proposal aside:

I agree that the political considerations you mention are important factors, but military operations based thereon must be definitely secondary to the primary operations of striking at the heart of Germany.²³⁴

There were serious military and terrain difficulties with Churchill's proposal, to be sure, and the Allies probably did not

234. Quoted in James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Soldier of Freedom (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Jovanovich, 1970), pp. 489-479. Cited in Bennett Kovrig, The Myth of Liberation: East-Central Europe in U.S. Diplomacy and Politics since 1941 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 11.

This is sharp contrast to Soviet wartime strategy, in which, once the immediate German military threat to the survival of the Soviet state had been effectively eliminated, political objectives were constantly uppermost in Stalin's mind. In October 1944, for instance, when Marshal Malinovsky protested that Stalin's order to take Budapest was inadvisable while there remained more pressing enemy military targets in Hungary, Stalin replied that it was politically imperative to capture Budapest at that point, even if in the process the Red Army would have to lose more lives than would otherwise have been necessary. Seweryn Bialer, Stalin and his Generals (New York: Pegasus, 1969), p. 614. Cited in Ulam, The Rivals: America & Russia since World War II (New York: Viking Press, 1971), p. 41. More notorious is the case of the Soviet armies across the Vistula from Warsaw in 1944, who delayed driving the Nazis out of the city until the Polish underground (looming as potentially the most effective anti-Communist Polish organization following liberation) had first been destroyed.

have the manpower needed to mount such an operation, but at least Churchill, a student of Clausewitz, was trying to find a strategy that would not leave Stalin with a monopoly of power in Eastern Europe at war's end. Roosevelt, on the other hand, seems simply to have lost interest in the Balkans after the fall of Rome, and the Italian campaign was left as a "holding operation."²³⁵ The US Chiefs of Staff actively supported this position, recommending in 1943 that the United States should take no responsibilities "in the areas of the Balkans including Austria."²³⁶ When, at the Tehran Conference, the President allowed himself to speculate openly on an operation in the direction of the Ljubljana Gap (seemingly only to test Stalin's reaction), FDR's confidant Harry Hopkins turned to Admiral Ernest King and demanded to know who was behind "that Adriatic business." King answered at once that

235. This is the view of Robert Murphy, one of the top American officials on Yugoslavia at the time. See Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors (New York: Pyramid Books, 1965), p. 247. The Yugoslav Communists, incidentally, were so concerned by the prospect of an Anglo-American invasion that in 1943 they held negotiations with the German command in Zagreb to arrange for a non-belligerency pact and for joint operations against the British. See Momcilo Selic, "Silence in Belgrade: Waldheim's Tito Connection," The New Leader 69 (no. 9, June 16-30, 1986): p. 4. See also David Martin, Patriot or Traitor: The Case of General Mihailovich (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), p. 44.

236. The Chiefs argued against American involvement in any aspect of Austrian affairs, and the US representative on the European Advisory Commission in London, John B. Winant, had a difficult time in June 1944 persuading FDR just to permit American participation in the Allied Control Commission in Vienna. In the end, the military agreed only with great reluctance to establish an American zone of occupation in Austria. See Philip E. Mosely, The Kremlin and World Politics: Studies in Soviet Policy and Action (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), p. 205. Also Kertész, Between Russia and the West, p. 58.

as far as the Chiefs of Staff were concerned, nothing could be farther from their plans.²³⁷

By 1943, Hungarian leaders, including Horthy, could see that the Allies would eventually win the war, and began to look for a way to extricate themselves from the disaster which loomed ahead for Germany and its satellites. Representatives of the regime were secretly instructed to make contact with American and British officials in Switzerland, where they stressed (no doubt with some disingenuousness) the anti-Soviet motivation for Hungary's wartime policies and pledged to surrender to Anglo-American armies immediately upon their appearance on Hungarian soil.²³⁸ Although by this time US and British diplomats had very good reason to doubt that there would be any Allied invasion through the Ljubljana Gap, "the Western negotiators did not contradict the Hungarian assumption that British and American forces would reach Hungary and occupy the mid-Danubian basin."²³⁹ Secret contacts between Hungarian and US officials continued into 1944, conducted in part through Allen Dulles' OSS facilities in Berne, and in early March a four-man American team, headed by an

237. Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins (New York: Harper & Bros., 1948), pp. 780-781. Cited in Wolff, The Balkans in Our Time, p. 250.

238. Mark Imre Major, American Hungarian Relations, 1918-1944 (Astor, FL: Danubian Press, 1974), pp. 237-238. It was an indication of the anxiety in the Hungarian government over the wisdom of its alliance with Berlin - at least under Miklós Kállay, Premier after March 1942 - that Hungary's air-defense units allowed Allied bombers to fly over Hungarian territory uncontested.

239. Kertész, Between Russia and the West, p. xi. Kertész was an official of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry at the time.

Army Colonel, parachuted into Hungary to try to arrange a Hungarian surrender. They were told that Horthy was ready to travel to Transylvania to announce Hungary's capitulation (and military shift to an anti-German posture), but only if 20,000 Western troops would first be airdropped into the country.²⁴⁰ The idea was of course completely impractical (Western forces were fighting on the Continent only in Italy at the time), if for no other reason than no American commander was prepared to send thousands of lightly-armed troops into an area that could be overrun at any moment by overwhelming German armor. Only an overland operation with at least twenty or thirty times the troops suggested might have had a serious chance of reaching Vienna or Budapest, and the British and American armies did not have that kind of manpower available. In any case, Hitler was not about to let Hungary switch sides at the first opportunity (which Romania, at a geographical advantage relative to Hungary, was shortly to succeed in doing, though into Soviet, not American hands), and on March 19, 1944, Hungary was finally occupied by the German Army. Nevertheless, as late as September 1944, Churchill was still hoping for an Allied attack through the northern Adriatic toward Austria and Hungary, but only if the German forces in northern Italy could first be put to rout. However, the Germans were able to retreat from Italy in orderly fashion, and all thought of reaching Central Europe before the

240. Major, American Hungarian Relations, p. 245.

Russians had to be permanently discarded.²⁴¹ At one point there was even some thought given to Western landings in Albania and Bulgaria, but the Chiefs of Staff dismissed the idea.²⁴²

Throughout 1943 and 1944, the British government endeavored to come to some sort of understanding with Stalin delimiting what should be the Soviet role in Eastern Europe following the war, while State Department representatives stressed that the United States was opposed to any "spheres of influence" in Eastern Europe and did not look with favor upon the British-Soviet talks. Despite the American position, Churchill traveled to Moscow in October 1944, where he proposed to Stalin the well-known arrangements for sharing power in the Balkans: the Soviet Union was to have a 90 percent share in Romania and a 75 percent share in Bulgaria (the practical difference in the two percentages being left unexplained), whereas Britain (and presumably the United States) was to have a 90 percent share in Greece. In Yugoslavia and Hungary each side was to have a 50 percent share.²⁴³ What exactly Churchill meant by all this, beyond an effort to stress Britain's interest in Eastern Europe, is

241. See Kertész, Between Russia and the West, p. 64.

242. Mosely, The Kremlin and World Politics, p. 204. See also Michael M. Boll, "U.S. Plans for a Postwar Pro-Western Bulgaria: A Little Known Wartime Initiative in Eastern Europe," Diplomatic History 7 (no. 2, September 1983). According to Boll, American interest in Bulgaria initially came from the OSS, which drafted a "Plan to Detach Bulgaria from the Axis" in 1943. But the plan failed when the Bulgarian leadership could not be induced to separate itself from Hitler.

243. Winston Churchill, Triumph and Tragedy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1953), pp. 227-228.

somewhat hard to discern. Stalin certainly must have felt that he was being given the go-ahead to do as he saw fit in Romania and Bulgaria, whereas he would have to be more cautious, at least for a while, in Hungary and Yugoslavia.²⁴⁴ Later that month, during conversations with British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, Molotov attempted to revise the figures, offering London a greater share in Bulgaria than previously suggested, in exchange for a 75 percent Soviet role in Hungary. Eden and Churchill accepted the change, particularly after Stalin, as apparent proof of his willingness to abide by the revised figures, ordered the Bulgarians to evacuate the Greek territory which they had seized during the war.²⁴⁵ For his part, Stalin must have felt that the British had acknowledged that Hungary was to come under Moscow's domination.

Meanwhile the Roosevelt Administration would not deign to engage in "horse trading" in Eastern Europe, preferring only to stress the Atlantic Charter, which had as its principles the political independence of liberated states, the development therein of democratic parties and constitutional government, and the noninvolvement of outside powers in those states' affairs. But the President and his advisors did not dwell at any great length on specifically how the Charter's lofty goals were to be implemented in each country. Instead, in looking toward the

244. In this regard it should be recalled that Stalin admonished Djilas for the Partisans' habit of flouting their Communist affiliation, while in Hungary the Communists were not given a free hand to quash their opponents until 1947.

245. See Mastny, Russia's Road to the Cold War, pp. 210-211.

postwar situation, Roosevelt anticipated that he would be able to deal effectively with Stalin through personal persuasion, as he believed he had done in the past. It was widely hoped within the US government that the United Nations, the umbrella title under which (for want of a better term) the anti-Axis powers were grouped, would emerge after the war as an organization strong enough to ensure future cooperation among the victorious powers. Yet from Stalin's perspective there was no reason not to assume that Churchill's ratios had American support.

In February 1945, when Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt met at Yalta, it was Stalin who was in the best negotiating position. The Red Army had just completed its successful drive through nearly all of prewar Poland and Hungary, while the American offensive had become bogged down in Belgium.²⁴⁶ Moreover, the American military was anticipating that substantial Soviet help would be needed in the fight against Japan, which was draining US lives at a horrible rate. Roosevelt was not inclined to press Stalin too hard on Eastern Europe, but Stalin was willing to sign a "Declaration on Liberated Europe" which called, inter alia, for the creation in all liberated countries of "governmental authorities broadly representative of all democratic elements in

246. The German offensive of December 1944 - the "Battle of the Bulge" - would seem to disprove the view held by some observers that Nazi resistance to the Western armies was less fierce than on the Eastern Front. According to at least one analysis, however, Hitler launched the attack in order to demonstrate to Roosevelt that Western victory was not certain and that the United States and Britain would therefore do well to make a separate peace with Germany. See Martin F. Herz, Beginnings of the Cold War (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1966), p. 77.

the population and pledged to the earliest possible establishment through free elections of governments responsible to the will of the people." In a companion "Declaration on Poland" it was agreed that a provisional Polish government would be established "pledged to the holding of free and unfettered elections ... on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot." Stalin signed the two agreements knowing that he was giving up little that was of tangible value or that could in any way be enforced. The Soviet-inspired Lublin government could accept as many Western-oriented Poles as the British and Americans required, but, as Stalin well knew, the bottom line was that the Red Army would remain in control of Poland. In fact, although Roosevelt was delighted that the Soviet side had dropped its earlier reluctance to participate in the United Nations, by the end of the Yalta Conference it was easily the Soviet side which had made the most important gains: the US had implicitly accepted the 1919 Curzon Line at Tehran as the Polish-Soviet border, and neither the Americans nor the British had been able to reverse the Soviet claim upon the western Neisse as the new Polish-German border.²⁴⁷

In the closing stages of the war, the United States forfeited the chance to gain potentially significant leverage over the Soviet Union by passing up the opportunity to liberate

247. Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence, pp. 374-376. See also Lynn Ethridge Davis, The Cold War Begins: Soviet-American Conflict over Eastern Europe (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), passim, and Herz, Beginnings of the Cold War, especially Chapter 4, "Mostly Poland: Yalta and the Aftermath."

Berlin and Prague. By late March of 1945, in a reversal of the military situation of three months before, it was the Soviet drive on Berlin which had now been stalled, whereas the First, Third, and Ninth US Armies were moving rapidly eastward toward Berlin. In the course of pursuing the Wehrmacht across Germany, American armies penetrated into what had been arranged with the Russians as the Soviet occupation zone. There were soon few German forces capable of prolonged resistance left between the Americans and Berlin. Nevertheless, at the end of March, Supreme Allied Commander Dwight Eisenhower - with the full backing of the US Chiefs of Staff - elected to send his forces toward Leipzig and Dresden, stressing that taking Berlin was of relatively limited importance: "From a tactical point of view," the future US President said, "it is highly inadvisable for the American Army to take Berlin and I hope political influence won't cause me to take the city."²⁴⁸ Churchill made his impassioned disagreement with this sort of thinking known:

It ... seems that General Eisenhower may be wrong in supposing Berlin to be largely devoid of military and political importance. Even though German Government departments have to a great extent moved to the south, the dominating fact on German minds of the fall of Berlin should not be overlooked. The idea of

248. Eisenhower to General George S. Patton, quoted in Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower and Berlin, 1945: The Decision to Halt at the Elbe (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1967), p. 97. My italics. It was one of Eisenhower's main shortcomings that he often overlooked the strategic importance of an event or confrontation in favor of tactical or short-term considerations. Such was his perception in November 1956 that he could not take a strong stance against the Russians in Hungary while America's own Allies were invading Egypt. See Chapter 4.

neglecting Berlin and leaving it to the Russians to take at a later stage does not appear to me correct.²⁴⁹

Stalin was quick to approve Eisenhower's proposed change of course, adding that it was his view as well that Berlin was of little strategic importance. However, the fact that over a million Soviet soldiers soon turned on the German capital in a massive assault belied Stalin's words to the Allies, as did his remarks in a private conference with Milovan Djilas:

... whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his own social system. Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army can reach. It cannot be otherwise.²⁵⁰

Roosevelt, perhaps tired and weakened, was unwilling to overrule Eisenhower on a matter on which the Washington military staff concurred with the field commander. Accordingly, the Red Army liberated Berlin. On May 14, 1945, President Truman, despite Churchill's vehement objections, ordered American forces to withdraw from the German provinces of Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, and Thuringia into the Western occupation zones.²⁵¹

One hundred miles to the south, meanwhile, Patton had crossed into pre-1938 Czechoslovakia, where his forces were

249. Churchill to General Lord Ismay, in Churchill, Triumph and Tragedy, pp. 460-461. Cited in Jean Edward Smith, The Defense of Berlin (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1963), p. 42. Also Ambrose, Eisenhower and Berlin, passim.

250. Djilas, Conversations with Stalin, p. 114.

251. The provinces evacuated constitute over half the population of today's German Democratic Republic. The American position was reflected in a cable to London: the US "does not believe that the matter of retirement of our respective troops to our zonal frontiers should be used for bargaining purposes." Truman to Churchill, quoted in Chester Wilmot, The Struggle for Europe (New York: Harper & Bros., 1952), p. 696. Cited in Smith, The Defense of Berlin, p. 56.

welcomed by the Czechs and urged to continue on to Prague. German resistance was proving ineffective, but Eisenhower refused to authorize Patton to take the capital. Although Churchill vigorously urged Truman to let Patton continue, the new (and poorly briefed) President, aware that the Russians expected to liberate Prague themselves and desirous not to damage relations with Stalin over a seemingly minor issue, decided to place his faith in the wartime relationship with Moscow and allow the Red Army to take the city.²⁵² For the Czechs, who had established the only genuine democracy in Eastern Europe before the war, the American decision to leave the country in Soviet hands was another indication, as with the 1938 Munich Agreement, that the West was not interested in Czechoslovakia and that the Czechs would do best to come to some type of understanding with the Soviet Union.²⁵³

252. For a discussion of this decision, see Korbelt, The Communist Subversion of Czechoslovakia, pp. 127-128., and Tad Szulc, Czechoslovakia Since World War II (New York: The Viking Press, 1971), pp. 5-15.

It is also worth mentioning that the American military and civilian leaders were closely aware of the tremendous war weariness which the American public and soldiers felt. Calling for the maintenance of a large American army on the Continent in order to pressure the Soviet Union - a valiant ally, after all, as the President and the media had been stressing for years - was going to be near suicide from a political standpoint and an invitation to mass mutiny from a military one.

253. When a Congressional delegation led by Senator Burt Wheeler complained to the President about Soviet intentions in Eastern Europe, Truman reportedly told them, "Gentlemen, you are needlessly worried about Russian communism. I am worried about British imperialism." See Sidney Hook, Out of Step: An Unquiet Life in the Twentieth Century (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), p. 320.

The impact of Truman's caution on Soviet-American relations was equally significant. By being able to point to the fact that it was their forces which had liberated Budapest, Warsaw, Prague, Vienna, and Berlin, the Soviet side exploited the guilt to a large degree felt in the United States (less so in Britain) that the USSR had been left to carry too much of the burden of the fight against Hitler. Given the tremendous losses which the Soviet Union had suffered during the course of the war, and taking into account the US military's expectation that Soviet help would be required for the fight against Japan, American policy makers were unwilling to pressure Stalin in 1945 to uphold the agreements which he had signed at Yalta. The staggering estimates of the cost in lives of an invasion of the Japanese home islands probably made Truman's reluctance to pressure Stalin over Eastern Europe understandable, but it still should have been recalled in Washington that it had been the Soviet Union, not the US or Britain, who had originally signed a non-aggression pact with Hitler (which then led to the division of Poland between the two totalitarian giants and the Soviet incorporation of the Baltic states and attack on Finland). Or perhaps Truman might have stopped to consider that the Soviet-Nazi partnership had been ended only with the German attack of June 1941. Until that point Stalin had been quite content with the arrangement.²⁵⁴

254. And one can only speculate how the Truman Administration would have reacted had it known that Stalin had learned in October 1941, through the master Soviet agent in Tokyo, Richard Sorge, of the impending Japanese attack on American, British, and Dutch forces in the Pacific, but then had failed to pass the information on to Roosevelt. Stalin was

In the crucial first few months following the defeat of the Nazis, while battle-tested American forces remained on the Continent, Stalin took care to hide his hand in Eastern Europe (and the Zhdanovites, agitating for a more forward line, had not yet achieved effective control over Soviet policy). Moreover, Harry Truman had indicated within days of his accession to the Presidency - when he blasted Molotov in Washington over Soviet abuses in Poland - that he was going to be far more obstinate than Roosevelt, giving Stalin even greater cause not to move more quickly in Eastern Europe than necessary. Accordingly, coalition governments were duly established there, in some cases with non-Communists at the head, and further steps toward democracy were promised. In Hungary the Communists claimed, for Western consumption, to have accepted their poor showing at the polls, and rival parties were permitted to operate without apparent harassment. When, in the wake of the American withdrawal from Czechoslovakia in December 1945, the Communists received 38 percent of the vote there in a (more or less) free election (the largest Communist polling in any relatively fair election ever), American observers could not complain. Elsewhere, the main US reaction to the growing evidence of Communist strong-arm tactics in Romania and Bulgaria was to try to talk the Russians into granting greater democratic privileges, a policy pursued without

so convinced of the accuracy of Sorge's report, one should add, that he withdrew the bulk of his armies from the Soviet Far East and deployed them against the Nazis, which was critical in stopping the German advance. See Corson and Crowley, The New KGB, p. 205.

great success by Secretary of State James Byrnes at the December 1945 Foreign Ministers Conference in Moscow and in the first few months of 1946.²⁵⁵

Meanwhile, President Truman ordered American ground forces in Europe steadily reduced. Between June 1945 and March 1946, US forces on the Continent were drawn down from 3.5 million men to 400,000, and by 1948 to a scant two divisions. In the same period Soviet ground forces were reduced from 12 million men to about 3 million, although American intelligence estimates at the time appear to have overestimated the numbers, and certainly the war-fighting potential, of the remaining Soviet forces.²⁵⁶ Even so, it was the United States which maintained an atomic monopoly, from which Stalin drew the lesson that American positions should not be too flippantly disregarded. Though Truman had not seen fit to invoke the atomic threat, the Americans' very possession of the deadly weapon was a major concern in the Kremlin. Stalin decided to tread lightly in Finland in part because he judged there to be close interest in Washington in Finland's

255. Many State Department officials dealing with Eastern Europe urged that relations with Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Romania be broken, or that other forms of diplomatic pressure be enacted, in response to Communist excesses there, but their suggestions were not accepted. For a discussion of this issue, see Hugh De Santis, The Diplomacy of Silence: The American Foreign Service, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War, 1933-1947 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), particularly Chapter 7, "Between Cooperation and Confrontation."

256. See Matthew A. Evangelista, "Stalin's Postwar Army Reappraised," International Security 7 (no. 3, Winter 1982/1983): pp. 112-115. Also Kovrig, The Myth of Liberation, p. 43.

independence, while in Bulgaria the Communists were ordered to back off for a few weeks when American representatives protested too vigorously against the country's obviously rigged elections.²⁵⁷ The persistence of American complaints over the Soviet failure to evacuate northern Iran following the end of the war, combined with the US atomic monopoly, may have been what induced Stalin to withdraw from Iran in 1946, though there is no evidence that Truman linked America's atomic capability with the situation in the Middle East.²⁵⁸ But in Eastern Europe, unlike Iran, American protests over Soviet policy must certainly have struck Stalin as disingenuous, since the United States had withdrawn its troops - the symbol of American power - from eastern Germany and Czechoslovakia at the first available opportunity and continued to pull out of Western Europe at a steady pace. General George Marshall later commented on the

257. John Lukács, A New History of the Cold War (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), p. 62. The United States did not officially recognize the Bulgarian regime until 1948, nearly two years after it had established formal diplomatic links with Bucharest and Budapest.

258. Despite the contentions of the "Revisionist" school, there is no evidence that during the pre-Sputnik era (when the United States was acknowledged in both Washington and Moscow to be preeminent in atomic weapons) the American government ever threatened to use its atomic arsenal in a compelling fashion relative to the Soviet Union. In fact, the only postwar instance in which a US President even subtly threatened to use a nuclear weapon came in 1953 when President Eisenhower sought to bring pressure on the Communists to negotiate an armistice in Korea, but even in that case the Soviet leadership was not required to withdraw from any piece of territory or otherwise make a concession to the United States. By contrast, Nikita Khrushchev explicitly threatened London, Paris, and Tel Aviv with nuclear devastation in November 1956.

frustration he felt as Secretary of State when he was urged to "give the Russians hell" at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in March 1947:

At that time, my facilities for giving them hell - and I am a soldier and know something about the ability to give hell - was 1 and 1/3 divisions over the entire United States. This is quite a proposition when you deal with somebody who has 260 and you have 1 and 1/3. We had nothing in Alaska. We did not have enough to defend the air strip at Fairbanks.²⁵⁹

American policy began to change noticeably only in 1947, when President Truman petitioned Congress to grant an aid package to permit Greece (fighting a Communist insurgency) and Turkey (facing Soviet territorial claims) to resist Soviet pressure. In calling in broad terms for the US to support "free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures," the "Truman Doctrine" went further than George Kennan would argue later that year in his highly influential "Mr. X" article in Foreign Affairs. In Kennan's words:

Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the Western world is something that can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy, which cannot be charmed or talked out of existence.²⁶⁰

259. Robert H. Ferrell, George C. Marshall as Secretary of State, 1947-1949 (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1960), pp. 72-73. Quoted in Kertész, Between Russia and the West, pp. 69-70.

260. George F. Kennan [Mr. X], "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," Foreign Affairs 25 (no. 4, July 1947). Truman's address to Congress of March 1947 is reprinted in John F. O'Connor, Cold War and Liberation: A Challenge of Aid to the Subject Peoples (New York: Vintage Press, 1961), pp. 520-522.

Still, neither Truman nor Kennan attempted to answer the question of how the United States should work to reverse the situation in which free peoples had already been taken over by an outside power, which was the case in the East European states by 1949, if not for the most part by 1947. "Containment" as practiced by the Truman Administration proved successful in its limited goal: Greece and Turkey were not subverted or otherwise taken over by the Communists (though as mentioned Stalin decided to terminate support to the Greeks chiefly for reasons related to the struggle for power within the CPSU), while Marshall Plan economic support to Western Europe helped turn back Communist inroads there. In Czechoslovakia, however, Truman seems to have shown little interest in working to keep the Communists out of power, and in February 1948, after Stalin vetoed Czech participation in the Marshall Plan, a Communist coup toppled the coalition government in Prague. But when Stalin then tried to force the Western Allies out of Berlin, Truman rose to the challenge, and West Berlin was kept out of Communist hands.²⁶¹ To be effective in

261. It is worth noting that several advisors to Truman, including Secretary of the Army Kenneth Royall, were opposed to the Airlift, arguing that war with the Soviet Union might result. Truman, supported by General Lucius Clay in Berlin, answered unequivocally, "The United States is going to stay. Period." See Smith, The Defense of Berlin, pp. 107-109. Similar resolve on the part of the President with respect to American-occupied areas of eastern Germany and Czechoslovakia in April and May of 1945 might have resulted, at the least, in greater American leverage over Soviet policy in Eastern Europe. Communist regimes in Bohemia and eastern Germany could almost certainly not have been established in such an environment, and it is my belief that Stalin would not have gone to war to force the US out of either area.

Europe, Containment (as articulated by Kennan) required a military component, and so in April 1949, building upon an earlier British military arrangement with France and Benelux, the NATO alliance was established. Soon thereafter the American, French, and British occupation zones in Germany were consolidated into the German Federal Republic, which, under the leadership of Konrad Adenauer, cooperated closely with the United States. Only in China did Containment prove unsuccessful, though it would seem that the United States had only marginal influence over the course of events in that country.²⁶²

American diplomats in Hungary in this period were left with no leverage over Mátyás Rákosi and Stalin's other Hungarian satraps, and could do little to prevent the Communists from seizing power there. In 1946 the US Mission in Budapest issued periodic denunciations of Communist fraud and intimidation, and there were protests to the Allied (Soviet-dominated) Control Commission, but these toothless declarations could only slow, not reverse, the Communist takeover. When representatives of various democratic or otherwise pro-Western Hungarian organizations approached American diplomats in Budapest for help, they were told that there would be no external assistance and that resistance to the Communists would unfortunately have to take the form of "personal sacrifice," advice not likely to encourage

262. For a closer look at American policy in this period, see John Lewis Gaddis, Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Halle, The Cold War as History; Lukács, A New History of the Cold War; Ulam, The Rivals.

opposition to the HCP.²⁶³ Moreover, the Truman Administration, like the Eisenhower Administration in its turn, was not prepared to facilitate the establishment in the West of a government-in-exile for Hungary or for any of the other East European states, preferring in effect to cede Eastern Europe to Stalin and to try to ensure only that Western Europe and the Mediterranean did not fall into his hands. Probably the only tangible effort made by the United States in support of Hungarian anti-Communists in this period was to arrange for the (dangerous and often highly daring) escape from Hungary of many of the country's top democratic leaders, though of course this was of little consolation to the millions of Hungarians left behind. In short, rather than attempt in some manner to stop the Communist takeover, or, after 1949, to undermine Rákosi's regime, US policy limited itself to exploiting the Communist takeover in Hungary for propaganda purposes elsewhere - particularly in Western Europe. In the words of one American official in Budapest in this period, the United States sought only to "force the Communists to take steps which would publicly demonstrate the falsity of their claims to have come to power through popular support."²⁶⁴

263. Stanley M. Max, The United States, Great Britain, and the Sovietization of Hungary, 1945-1948 (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1985), p. 36.

264. Felix [McCargar], A Short Course in the Secret War, p. 261. A CIA officer at the time later told Gáza Katona that there had been a clandestine American attempt to sow seeds of dissent and confusion within the Rákosi regime, but that it had failed to bring tangible results. Katona, letter to the author.

By 1948, all pretense of Soviet-American cooperation had fallen away and the American public had begun to acknowledge (with its rejection of Henry Wallace's Presidential bid, for example) that Stalin was seeking more than just secure borders. In the span of only two or three years, American opinion swung from the view that the Soviet leadership would not revert to its prewar hostility toward the West to the view that Moscow was now a belligerent adversary that would not rest until Western Europe as well as the United States had fallen under Communist control - whether by internal or external takeover. A widely held tenet of this latter view, shared to a great extent by the American military leadership by the time of the Korean War, was that Stalin would order the invasion of Western Europe at the first opportunity and that the Red Army lacked only shoes to march across Germany and reach the English Channel. But though this assessment of Soviet intentions may have been accurate, the analysis of Soviet capabilities was faulty, in that the Truman Administration, no less than the public, failed to appreciate the extent to which the Soviet Union had been devastated and weakened by the war. At a time when the Soviet Union was vastly inferior to the United States by every standard of economic productivity, Stalin went to great pains, even during the Zhdanovite period, to hide his country's relative weakness. The resurgence of state terror in the Soviet Union and the satellites, the promulgation after several years of disuse of the ideological line that the capitalist world again was seeking to surround and defeat the socialist revolution, and the sharp cutback in ties with the

United States were all designed to a great degree to close off Communist society to the prying eyes of the West. The Red Army's posture of military belligerence, even if it ended up prompting the West to rearm to some extent, was certainly preferable from Stalin's perspective to an image of military and economic weakness, which threatened to lead to a Western effort to reverse Soviet gains in Eastern Europe. Similarly, Stalin was fearful of ceding the initiative to the West, seeking instead to keep Truman and the Europeans off balance. Each of the major American actions of this period - the aid package to Greece and Turkey, the Marshall Plan, the Vandenberg Resolution, the Berlin airlift, the North Atlantic Treaty, and even the decision to come to the assistance of the South Koreans in 1950 - was only a reaction to Communist initiatives, fundamentally not a coherent policy at all. American officials took it almost for granted that there was nothing the US could do to push the Soviet forces back out of Eastern Europe or to bring down the Communist regimes in power there. Soviet strategists in the Malenkovite camp, who had been worried about possible American pressure against them in Eastern Europe, found that there was in fact no need for concern.

Potential openings for American leverage on Moscow were of course greatest in those Communist countries in which no Soviet troops were stationed - Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. But in 1948 the regimes of Tito in Yugoslavia and Enver Hoxha in Albania were at least as hostile to the United States as those of Rákosi or Bierut, and after the Prague coup the Czech leadership under Gottwald and Slansky was no different.

Only in the wake of the Cominform's expulsion of Yugoslavia (a development to which the United States had contributed only indirectly, to the extent that American aid to Greece had helped convince Stalin of the Malenkovite argument in favor of calling off the Yugoslav-backed Greek insurgency) did an opportunity for American involvement in an anti-Soviet effort in Eastern Europe materialize. Pressure by Stalin against Tito's regime forced the Yugoslav dictator to look to the West for help, but not before first loudly reiterating his commitment to Leninism and claims to Trieste, positions not likely to win favor with the unsubtle Americans. Within the United States there was opposition to backing the Yugoslav Communists from several quarters, but Truman decided to accept Secretary of State Dean Acheson's assessment that Yugoslav independence of Moscow was an "erosive and disintegrating force" working against Soviet control of the rest of Eastern Europe. Then in December 1949 the President approved NSC 58/2, which called, baldly enough, for efforts "to bring about the elimination of Soviet power from the satellite states."²⁶⁵ Domestic opposition, however, was not negligible, and it was therefore not until April 1951 that Truman notified Congress that he was extending Tito 29 million Dollars in military aid, under the authority of the Mutual Defense Assistance Act.²⁶⁶ Even then, it was not until after the visit

265. Gaddis, Strategies of Containment, pp. 67-68.

266. On the other hand, covert assistance was supplied to the Yugoslavs as early as 1949, circumventing the need to make the policy public. See the section Covert Operations below.

to Washington in June 1951 of the Yugoslav Chief of Staff, General Koca Popovich, and the visit to Belgrade in October 1951 of the US Chief of Staff, General J. Lawton Collins, that the US and Yugoslavia formalized their military relationship.²⁶⁷

Even as the American aid program to Yugoslavia was beginning to be implemented, protests against the Truman Administration's Containment policy, particularly from American conservatives, grew in number and intensity.²⁶⁸ It was now also charged that Roosevelt had "sold out" the East Europeans at Yalta (an oversimplified but not completely illegitimate complaint), and that American foreign policy had been undermined by Communist agents in the government, particularly in the State Department. This latter accusation was sparked by the Alger Hiss hearings in 1948, with their many revelations of Soviet intelligence activities in the United States before and during the war. As public frustration mounted further over Communist gains between

267. See David L. Larson, United States Policy Toward Yugoslavia, 1943-1963 (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1979), pp. 238-241. According to another view, the extent of American domestic opposition at the time to giving Tito some form of military aid has generally been overestimated. See Lorraine H. Lees, "The American Decision to Assist Tito, 1948-1949," Diplomatic History 2 (no. 4, Fall 1978).

268. Opponents of assistance to Yugoslavia maintained that in rushing to bail Tito out, the State Department was in effect giving Communism unnecessary global legitimacy. This charge was of course not far from the mark, since the Truman Administration had decided not to insist on some level of democratization within Yugoslavia as the price for American aid. When Marshal Tito told US Ambassador George Allen that Yugoslavia had "no other course than [to] remain [a] socialist state," Allen replied meekly that the United States "had no desire to try to make Yugoslavia change its system." USBelgrade 97, January 26, 1950. Archives 611.68/1-2650.

1945 and 1949, particularly in the wake of the Soviet detonation of an atomic weapon and Mao's victory in China, the prevailing climate was exploited by Senator Joe McCarthy and his supporters for their own political ends. Others, however, focused on the failure of the Truman Administration, with its Containment policy, to reverse Soviet gains in Eastern Europe (though this had never been one of Truman's or Acheson's goals), and called for a new American effort to try to bring about the downfall of Communist regimes there. This position grew in appeal following the Communist attack in Korea, as the Administration's failure (twice) to "contain" the Communists in the Far East lent strength to Truman's critics, who argued that a new approach to the Communist challenge was required. In 1951 Senator Alexander Wiley called for an end to American "pantywaist" diplomacy and urged that Congress make funds available for supporting revolutions behind the Iron Curtain. His call was soon echoed by Congressman Charles Kersten, who claimed that "unless the Soviet regime is undermined, subverted, and overthrown it will bring us war" and insisted that the United States commit itself to helping the East Europeans liberate themselves.²⁶⁹ In October 1951 Kersten succeeded in attaching an amendment to the Mutual Security Act which allocated 100 million Dollars for the training of East European émigrés into a force capable of fighting, either in conjunction with NATO or on its own, the bloc's Communist

269. "Let the people behind the iron curtain know," Kersten said, "that we will do everything we can to work for their eventual liberation." Cited in Kovrig, The Myth of Liberation, p. 103.

regimes.²⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the Kersten Amendment did not notably affect Truman's foreign policy, and the disappointed advocates of a vigorous effort to bring down Communism in Eastern Europe, led by John Foster Dulles, moved to concentrate their efforts on electing a Republican in 1952.²⁷¹

One aspect of Kersten's program which made little headway even in Congress was his call for the termination of American diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and all of its satellites. This was entirely unacceptable to Acheson and the President, although they were willing to consider (unspecified) other steps which might bring greater pressure upon the Communist regimes. Within the State Department, the Eastern Europe hands were eager to find an unofficial role for the many prominent East Europeans who had found their way (often with clandestine

270. Ibid. Kersten was apparently not aware that a major Anglo-American effort to train East European émigrés was already underway at the time, directed against Hoxha's regime in Albania. See Covert Operations, the last section in this chapter.

271. This is not to imply that there were no attempts within the Executive branch to try to develop a more effective policy toward Eastern Europe. As one mid-level State Department official lamented to a colleague:

In the case of Eastern Europe, ... it seems to us that for policy reasons we cannot talk to these people about the things they are most interested in (i.e. (a) "When will we be liberated?"; (b) "When are you [Americans] going to wake up to the fact that you will have to fight the Communists eventually?"; (c) "Don't you know that no Communists can be trusted, Stalinist or Titoist?", etc.).

Memo, A. N. Dragnich (EUR) to Henry Arnold (EUR), June 14, 1951. Archives 611.60/6-1451. My italics.

American assistance) to the United States, but who were now seen largely as an inconvenience. Accordingly, in June 1949 the Free Europe Committee was established, headed up by former Ambassador to Japan Joseph Grew and made possible in large measure by the efforts of George Kennan.²⁷² The leading officials of the State Department were more than happy to pass the burden of the struggle for democracy in Eastern Europe to the private sector, and within a few months the Free Europe Committee's leading vehicle for waging that struggle, Radio Free Europe, emerged. As originally planned, RFE was to have been established and then steadily enlarged at a relatively slow pace, but the plan was greatly accelerated following the outbreak of the Korean War, so that full-fledged Hungarian and Czechoslovak services were on the air by the end of 1951. Raising money for the radio was somewhat of a problem, so almost from the start RFE received a sizable percentage of its funding from the CIA, though RFE's veteran political advisors claim that operational and policy directives originated with the Free Europe Committee, not with the CIA.²⁷³ Opinions differed within Radio Free Europe on whether broadcasts' primary function should be purely informational or somewhat agitational, but there were always adherents (though not necessarily in the majority) to the view that RFE should work to

272. Alan A. Michie, Voices Through the Iron Curtain: The Radio Free Europe Story (New York: Dodd, Mead, & Company, 1963), pp. 11-12. See also the author's interview with William Griffith, Appendix D.

273. For a discussion of the evolution of Radio Free Europe, see the author's interview with Paul Henze, Appendix G.

further isolate the East European regimes from the populations and facilitate revolts at some point in the future. Meanwhile, State Department officials, who had initially favored the establishment of émigré-staffed radio stations, now became uneasy as RFE's audience in Eastern Europe grew rapidly. In the words of the CIA officer responsible for the Agency's dealings with RFE:

American ambassadors in Eastern Europe ... sometimes felt that their diplomatic negotiations with their host governments were being hampered by the publicity given to regime failings by RFE. Subjected to daily complaints from Communist officials, an American ambassador would infrequently bend under the pressure and demand that RFE moderate its criticism on a particular issue.²⁷⁴

Tension between RFE and the State Department never wholly abated, and the friction between the two institutions hampered American policy making toward Eastern Europe well into the Eisenhower Administration.

For its part, the Truman Administration, though having failed to develop a policy that effectively challenged Stalin's control over Eastern Europe, at least exploited relatively successfully the opportunity afforded by the Kremlin's break with Yugoslavia. But although in retrospect seemingly a logical choice, Truman's decision to back Belgrade despite Tito's commitment to Communism apparently had little lasting impression on American policy makers. In October 1956 a Communist regime came to power in Hungary which was prepared to accept a measure

274. Cord Meyer, Facing Reality: From World Federalism to the CIA (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), p. 118.

of assistance from the United States in an effort to engineer a Soviet military withdrawal, but officials in the Eisenhower Administration dismissed Imre Nagy's Communist regime out of hand. It remained an irony of US policy that even while Washington did little tangibly to challenge Communist control over Eastern Europe, policies which might have encouraged the latent anti-Soviet inclinations of certain East bloc regimes were, with the exception of aid to Yugoslavia, eschewed.

The US and the Purges

Throughout the period under consideration, there were wide differences in the extent to which various American decision makers were able, or willing, to perceive the splits within the Soviet leadership and by extension within and among the leaderships of the East European satellites. For some in Washington, the Soviet-Yugoslav split was nothing more than a Communist plot to lure the West to lower its guard, and the idea that the United States should actually give support to Tito was for them wholly repellent.²⁷⁵ Part of the reason that President Truman faced such difficulty in securing Congressional approval for assistance to Yugoslavia was that many Americans preferred to think that all Communists were equally objectionable - indeed until 1948, at least from a US point of view, that arguably had

275. In later years, there were those who refused to accept the Soviet-Romanian or even the Soviet-Chinese split as genuine. See for example, Anatoliy Golytsin, New Lies For Old: The Communist Strategy of Deception and Disinformation (London: The Bodley Head, 1984).

been true.²⁷⁶ Furthermore, the defection of Yugoslavia threatened to call into question the widespread perception in the US and Western Europe that the Red Army was in a position to attack the West, a worry which was causing British and American policy makers to work toward a European alliance. For both these reasons, too many State Department and White House officials were slow to recognize the opportunities which the rift between Tito and Stalin offered US policy. Although the exigencies of Realpolitik seemingly cried out for American efforts to try to split the East European regimes from Moscow, pervasive distrust of all Communists and reluctance to "make deals" with the other side still lingered in Washington. The same slowness to see potential opportunities would characterize American policy throughout Eastern Europe following the death of Stalin, toward the New Course in Hungary from 1953 to 1955, and with respect to Hungary in 1956.

For some influential Americans, however, not only was "National Communism" (whether of the Tito, Gomulka, or Nagy variety) viewed with suspicion, but because it portrayed Communism in an almost favorable light, it was seen to be perhaps even more dangerous to the United States than Stalinism. If the US now "jumped into bed with Tito," it was only the logical result of a Containment policy that eschewed doing something

276. For the American debates over Communism and Communist influence in this period, see Earl Latham, The Communist Conspiracy in Washington: From the New Deal to McCarthy (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966).

tangible to eradicate Communism altogether.²⁷⁷ In this view, only a Communism which was belligerent internationally and repressive internally would bring the West Europeans together and keep them on their guard. And although advocates of this view were troubled by the American rapprochement with Tito, their characterization of the Communist challenge was vindicated by the North Korean attack of June 1950 and the purges of top East European Communists from 1949 to 1953. American propaganda did not fail to make the most of the purges behind the Iron Curtain (though most Americans could not fathom the Communist leaders' motives), and those advocates of an effort to eradicate Communist power altogether were delighted at the news of thousands of arrests and executions of Communists in the "Peoples' Democracies."²⁷⁸

But did the United States go beyond propaganda and actually play a role in bringing about the East European purges? British author Stewart Steven believes so. He writes that in 1949 Allen Dulles, then a consultant to the CIA, convinced Agency officials to feed Stalin and Beria disinformation to the effect that Noel Field, an American with close ties to many East European leaders,

277. James Burnham commented, for example, "The strange truth is that the policy of containment has no goal. ... Its inner law is: let history do it." Burnham, Containment or Liberation (New York: John Day, 1953), pp. 42-43. Cited in Kovrig, The Myth of Liberation, p. 100.

278. "The comrades are merrily sticking knives in each others' backs and doing our dirty work for us," one of the CIA's leading officials is reported to have exulted at the time. See Leonard Mosley, Dulles: A Biography of Eleanor, Allen, and John Foster Dulles and Their Family Network (New York: The Dial Press/James Wade, 1978), p. 277.

was in reality a top CIA spymaster whose agents included leading Communists throughout the satellites.²⁷⁹ Field, who had always had pro-Communist sympathies, was a mid-level State Department official in the 1930s when he was recruited into Soviet intelligence by Hede Massing, one of the Comintern's operatives in the United States.²⁸⁰ From 1940 to 1942 Field was in Vichy France, where, as an official of the Unitarian Service Committee, he worked with refugees from Spain, among whom were many East European Communists. Then he spent the rest of the war in Switzerland, from where he "rendered great services to the Soviet Union," according to Jules Humbert-Droz, the head of the Swiss Communist Party.²⁸¹ With the approach of the Allied victory, Field contacted Allen Dulles, then working for the OSS in Berne, and offered to help select German émigrés from among the camps in liberated France for use in "Workers' Committees" which would enter Germany with the Allied armies and prevent Nazi sabotage of the factories. What Field did not tell Dulles was that most of the people he was recommending were Communists or fellow travelers.²⁸² Later, Dulles was embarrassed that he had been

279. Stewart Steven, Operation Splinter Factor (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1974).

280. Whittaker Chambers, Witness (New York: Random House, 1952), p. 381. See also Flora Lewis, The Man Who Disappeared: The Strange Story of Noel Field (London: Arthur Barker Limited, 1965).

281. Humbert-Droz claimed that Field joined a "Soviet military intelligence network" in Switzerland. The New York Times, December 2, 1949, p. 25.

282. Mosley, Dulles, pp. 171-172. According to this account, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., then an OSS officer in Paris, saw

duped by Field in this matter and supposedly was therefore prepared in turn to cause problems for Field should the opportunity arise. In 1948, Field's activities on behalf of Soviet intelligence in the 1930s came up at the Alger Hiss hearings in Washington, and early in 1949, as it was becoming likely that a subpoena would be brought against Field, he unexpectedly took a trip to Eastern Europe and soon disappeared. Field did not surface again until October, when Americans were puzzled to read that he was in prison in Budapest, charged with complicity in the case of László Rajk.²⁸³ In the meantime Noel's brother, Hermann, had been arrested in Warsaw when he tried to fly to Prague to meet with Czech officials on Noel's behalf,²⁸⁴ and Noel's wife was arrested when she too flew to Eastern Europe.

Steven and Mosley explain the arrest of Noel Field by Czech security officials in May 1949 as the result of a disinformation campaign by the CIA. According to these accounts, the key means of passing to the MVD the rumor that Noel Field was organizing an East European espionage network was through Jozef Swiatlo, Deputy Chief of Department 10 in the Bezpieka (UB), the Polish Security

through Field's suggestion immediately, whereas Allen Dulles had not.

283. Robert J. Lamphere, for example, one of the FBI agents working at the time to unmask Soviet agents in the United States, was "startled to learn" that according to the Hungarians, Field was charging "that Rajk had worked for him in the OSS." See Lamphere and Tom Shachtman, The FBI-KGB War: A Special Agent's Story (New York: Random House, 1986), p. 258. It seems that Field never actually testified at the trial as a witness against Rajk. Rather, "evidence" was extracted from him earlier under torture.

284. Hermann Field, interview with the author. See Appendix C.

Service - and allegedly an agent of the CIA at the same time.²⁸⁵ Swiatlo was to tell his colleagues in Polish and Soviet intelligence that Field was on a special CIA mission and that all the Communists whom Field had known in Spain, France, and Switzerland who now held leading posts in Eastern Europe were part of Field's network.²⁸⁶ Swiatlo, who personally arrested Hermann Field at the Warsaw airport and oversaw his interrogation, defected to the United States in December 1953, but Steven and Mosley charge that he already had been working for the CIA, though no evidence has been made public to support this claim.²⁸⁷ According to Hermann Field, Harry Rositzke, who was at

285. Steven, Operation Splinter Factor, p. 97. Steven goes so far as to say that the campaign to smear Noel Field was initially Swiatlo's idea - that because Field was friendly with Anna Duracz, the personal secretary of UB Chief Jakub Berman, Swiatlo hoped to use Field to ruin Berman. Before spreading any accusations, though, he first checked with his CIA controllers, on the chance that Field really was a CIA agent. Ibid., p. 93.

286. Ibid., p. 99. Swiatlo was always "in close touch with the KGB in Moscow and the other security services." Mosley, Dulles, p. 276.

287. Ibid. Where Steven maintains that the operation originated with Swiatlo or Allen Dulles (he isn't consistent), Mosley puts the point of origin with Frank Wisner, director of the CIA's Office of Policy Coordination (OPC, the division for covert operations). "The Wisner operation to 'blow' Noel Field to the Soviets," Mosley writes, "is one of the black marks of the CIA, and the source of information about it (British, incidentally) does not wish to be identified." Ibid., p. 510. His parentheses.

Unfortunately, Mosley's book is weakened by several serious problems, including the fact that sources are very rarely identified. And there are a "vast number of minor but annoying factual errors - dates and places wrong, persons incorrectly identified," Richard H. Ullman, "John Foster, Allen, and Eleanor," The New York Times Book Review, February 26, 1978, p. 29.

one point Chief of the Soviet Russia Division in the OPC, hinted that something like what Steven suggested might have been true, that Swiatlo might indeed have been working for the US at the time and might have been involved in framing the Field brothers.²⁸⁸ To reiterate, however, no one yet has conclusively demonstrated that Swiatlo was an American agent prior to his defection. Swiatlo himself vehemently denied that he had maintained any connection whatsoever with the CIA until his defection, even when the Polish government publicly declared that he had always been a CIA agent and that it was he who had first implicated Hermann Field.²⁸⁹ In 1954, Swiatlo insisted that the orders to arrest Hermann Field came from Party Chief Boleslaw Bierut,²⁹⁰ but in later years refused to discuss the case.²⁹¹

What is certain is that the Hungarian "court" which tried László Rajk, Tibor Szőnyi, and their "accomplices" in 1949 of "imperialist" loyalties based much of its case on alleged contacts between the accused and Noel Field. Field, the court charged (and the AVH officers involved in preparing the show trial actually seemed to believe this), was a United States intelligence officer of unrivaled importance. The AVH was ordered by its MVD overlords to demonstrate that Field had organized an American espionage network in Hungary, and was told

288. Hermann Field, interview with the author. See Appendix C.

289. The New York Times, October 26, 1954, p. 1.

290. Ibid.

291. See Hermann Field's account, Appendix C.

to produce witnesses who could attest to that fact. For example, when Béla Szász, one of the Hungarians whom the AVH had arrested, refused to disclose how he had been recruited by Noel Field (in reality Szász and Field had never met - the accusation was nonsense), he was interrogated and tortured for weeks. When the AVH discovered that Szász had once traveled through Switzerland by train, Szász was forced to confess to the incredible story that Field boarded the train while it was passing through Swiss territory and recruited him then and there.²⁹² But the Hungarians never put Field himself on trial, and neither did the Poles try Hermann Field.

The key question in all of this is whether Stalin or anyone else in the Soviet leadership genuinely believed that Noel Field was an American agent. Of course, Stalin needed little provocation to perceive conspiracy and treason in any of his subordinates,²⁹³ and sent thousands of CPSU members to their deaths in the 1930s on much less evidence than Swiatlo is alleged to have brought against Field.²⁹⁴ Nevertheless, at times foreign disinformation campaigns did succeed in causing Stalin to execute Soviet leaders whom he might not otherwise have destroyed: Nazi intelligence, for instance, is widely credited with having conveyed enough clever disinformation to Stalin slurring the

292. Szász, Volunteers for the Gallows, p. 46.

293. Stalin was known to doubt the loyalty even of Politburo members, as was mentioned regarding Marshal Voroshilov.

294. See Robert Conquest, The Great Terror: Stalin's Purges of the Thirties (New York: Macmillan, 1968).

loyalty of Marshal Tukhachevsky that Tukhachevsky and many of his colleagues were put to death in 1937.²⁹⁵ But the fact that Stalin in earlier years had executed top Communists at least in part due to falsehoods concocted by his country's adversaries does not prove that all subsequent executions of Party members stemmed from the same cause. On the contrary, Stalin made regular use of the Purge as a method both of eliminating Party rivals (genuine as well as imaginary) and of terrorizing potential opponents. The purges within the East European parties between 1949 and 1953 grew out of Stalin's effort to destroy Tito and Tito's influence among the satellites, a campaign which itself stemmed from Stalin's purge of the Zhdanovites in the Soviet Union beginning in 1948. There is every reason to believe, therefore, that Stalin saw in Noel Field simply the convenient vehicle for pinning the charge of "imperialism" on the men whom he and his obsequious East European satraps were already determined to destroy. If Allen Dulles or anyone else in the CIA spread the rumor that Field was a US agent, they were only encouraging Stalin in the cycle of terror he had already launched, and were certainly not responsible for causing the purges.²⁹⁶

295. See the interview with Ladislav Bittman, Oral History Project of the International Security Studies Program, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy; Boston, September 1986.

296. Hermann Field said to me that "the idea of portraying Noel as a leading CIA agent was an obvious thing to do, because of Noel's wartime work with the OSS." But even he doubted whether anything which the CIA might have tried could have had a significant effect on the course that the East

As has been mentioned above, the Hungarian show trials, in which Noel Field's "testimony" was the main evidence against Rajk and the others, were closely managed from the start by officials of the Soviet MVD. Steven contends that Stalin agreed with MVD General Fyodor Bielkin that "Hungary was the center of the [Field] conspiracy,"²⁹⁷ and this seems to be confirmed by the account of Béla Szász. According to Szász, General Bielkin personally oversaw the interrogation of prisoners in AVH prisons and insisted that Szász and others confess to working for Noel Field. When Szász continued to plead his innocence, Bielkin became hysterical and raged that Szász must confess.²⁹⁸ Bielkin's behavior would appear to reflect more the frustration of a man responsible for the preparation of a show trial than the

European purges took. Hermann Field, interview with the author. See Appendix C.

Thomas Powers, in general a critic of the CIA, agrees that "Stalin clearly needed no encouragement where purges were concerned." And while he doubts whether Steven's thesis is accurate, he feels that if one of the CIA's alleged communications to Swiatlo in 1949 regarding Field were ever to come to light "it could rewrite a huge chunk of postwar history." Powers believes that Stewart's "central premise apparently came from someone in the British SIS who did not like [Allen] Dulles," corroborating Mosley's claim above that his principal source was British as well. See Thomas Powers, The Man Who Kept the Secrets: Richard Helms and the CIA (New York: Pocket Books, 1979), p. 406. Steven himself identifies his sources only as former British and American intelligence officers, as well as former (and current) East European officials. No effort is made to attribute even one of the many claims in his book to any particular source. In a letter to this author, Steven wrote that he was still obligated to protect the identity of his sources. He would not respond to any of the questions I raised regarding several of the specific claims in his book.

297. Steven, Operation Splinter Factor, p. 116.

298. Szász, Volunteers for the Gallows, pp. 138-139.

exasperation of a counterintelligence officer trying to break a suspected spy, a distinction suggesting that Bielkin probably was unconcerned with whether Field truly was or was not a US spy. In fact, if there was any genuine counterintelligence work done at all on the Field case, it took place in Prague, six months before Bielkin and his MVD and AVH underlings began wreaking confessions out of broken prisoners, when the Czechs conducted a routine investigation on their own into whether Noel Field might have been a Western agent. The Czech examination of Field's background actually began in October 1948, when Field first applied for a visa, well before Steven alleges Allen Dulles thought to "blow" Field to the MVD.²⁹⁹ Moreover, the fact that it was the Czechs - not the Poles - who first alerted Moscow to the Field case would seem to dispute the contention that it was the CIA, through Swiatlo and the UB, which was responsible for Field's arrest. But most interestingly of all, the very Czech officials who reviewed Noel Field's background were among those later arrested and (in a malicious invention) charged with working for Field,³⁰⁰ strongly suggesting that someone was determined to remove from the scene the only East European officials who had seen Field's genuine file and thus who knew

299. This became known when parts of the archives of the Czech Party were published following the "Prague Spring" of 1968. See Jiri Pelikan, The Czechoslovak Political Trials, 1950-1954: The Suppressed Report of the Dubcek Government's Commission of Inquiry, 1968 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1971), p. 72.

300. Ibid.

perfectly well that he was not working for American intelligence.³⁰¹

Having concluded their inquiry, the Czechs apparently saw in Field "merely a potential spy" and not the key American agent that the Hungarian court would later portray.³⁰² But soon, by the spring of 1949, the Czechs were coming under heavy Soviet and Hungarian pressure to arrest Field. The course of events which seems likeliest to have taken place is that when the initial Czech report reached Moscow, Beria or Stalin recognized that Field represented the perfect vehicle for bringing down Rajk and other "state enemies." If any part of Steven's thesis is true, it is possible that at this point Swiatlo's report helped in the decision to arrest Field. But whatever the role Swiatlo might have played, it seems clear that Bielkin was instructed to ensure that Field was arrested. Just the same, there is no evidence that Stalin declared that "nothing ... was as important as destroying Field and the nest of vipers he controlled."³⁰³ What is known for sure is that when Jindrich Vesely, the head of the Political Department of the Czech Ministry of the Interior (who knew Field's true life story), refused to issue the order for

301. I am inclined to believe that it was Rákosi or Bielkin who was responsible for the arrests of the Czechs - in order to conceal that Rajk and his colleagues were being convicted on fictitious evidence - and not Swiatlo or any other alleged CIA agent, whose motive supposedly would have been to try to cover up a baseless American disinformation campaign against Field.

302. Pelikán, The Czechoslovak Political Trials, 72.

303. Steven, Operation Splinter Factor, p. 104.

Field's arrest, Bielkin flew to Prague to meet with Gottwald. After the meeting Gottwald was reported to have said, "If General Belkin, too, has verified it and supports it, then do as they want."³⁰⁴ And so Field was arrested.

Before looking at the more open American policy toward Eastern Europe, it must be noted that, according to Steven, Swiatlo was not the CIA's only means of conveying disinformation to Soviet intelligence about Noel Field, though he was by far the most important conduit. Steven maintains that the CIA had doubled an agent whom the Russians believed to have penetrated CIA headquarters, and now used this agent to convey to Moscow the news that Noel Field was involved in some secret affair with Allen Dulles that no one at Agency headquarters would talk about.³⁰⁵ Secondly, an English CIA agent named "Hathaway," who reportedly had already regularly passed himself off as an SIS informant to Bielkin at Soviet headquarters in Vienna, now was directed to tell Bielkin that SIS officers were accusing the CIA of putting so much emphasis on the Field case that the clandestine SIS network in Czechoslovakia was being

304. Pelikán, The Czechoslovak Political Trials, p. 73. This was not the only occasion in which Gottwald was reluctant to launch a purge. Two years later, Rákosi threatened to publicly denounce Gottwald if he failed to have Slansky arrested. See the interview with General Jan Sejna, Oral History Project of the International Security Studies Program, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy; Washington, DC, July 1985.

305. Steven, Operation Splinter Factor, p. 101. Steven insists that this agent, whom Soviet intelligence allegedly thought it had recruited while he worked at the State Department, was contacted by his ostensible Soviet controllers and told to find out what he could about Field.

endangered.³⁰⁶ I am inclined to doubt very strongly whether either the double agent whom the Russians wrongly trusted or Bielkin's ostensible informer in reality ever existed. But if, by some chance, the CIA did possess such assets, I cannot see why Allen Dulles, Frank Wisner, or anyone else would choose to risk expending them on a case which would gain the United States little of non-propaganda value. It was because of problems such as these that William Shawcross, by no means a spokesman for the establishment, dismissed Steven's allegations as contrived.³⁰⁷

Following Swiatlo's defection to the United States in late 1953 and his announcement in a subsequent press conference that the Field brothers had been wrongly arrested behind the Iron Curtain (without attempting to explain the Communists' reason for doing so), the Polish and Hungarian regimes felt compelled to release Hermann and Noel Field. Interestingly, though, Noel Field and his wife elected to remain in Hungary. According to Hermann Field, Noel still mistrusted the West (though significantly not holding the United States responsible for his

306. Ibid., p. 102. Steven does not mention whether Bielkin asked "Hathaway" for details about the British network in Czechoslovakia, which one might think would have been Bielkin's most logical question. Instead, we are to believe that Bielkin was interested only in Noel Field, even after he had been told (from a source he is said to have trusted) that the SIS was running an effective espionage network in Prague.

307. "This book reads like the dedicated and ingenious work of a man who has been told in confidence a fascinating, if bourbon-soaked, yarn and who has tried with all his might to entice the facts - enlarging some, diminishing some, ignoring some - toward confirming it." William Shawcross, "Another CIA Plot?" The New York Review of Books 21 (no. 21-22, January 23, 1975): p. 42.

arrest in Prague) and hoped that the type of Communism he believed in would soon emerge in Hungary.³⁰⁸ Whatever the attractiveness of Imre Nagy's New Course, however, or its role in helping Noel Field to decide to stay in Hungary in 1954, the point which must be stressed is that Field came out in support of the Soviet invasion of November 4, 1956. In 1956 and in the years to follow, Field gave János Kádár his full backing, and in turn was viewed by the regime as a state hero - whether as a victim of Rákosi's purges or of America's "Red scare" it is hard to say. Field was reported to have obtained a position as translation supervisor in one of the Hungarian foreign-language publishing houses,³⁰⁹ though in fact, according to a former official in Czechoslovak intelligence, he was actually a consultant to the Hungarian security service under the Kádár regime.³¹⁰ It was fitting, then, that following his death, Field's remains were interred with honor alongside those of the greatest heroes of the Hungarian Party.³¹¹

308. Hermann Field, interview with the author. See Appendix C.

309. The New York Times, December 28, 1956, p. 6.

310. Ladislav Bittman, conversation with the author. Field's translation work was reported to have included the editing of anti-American forgeries. See Bittman, The KGB and Soviet Disinformation: An Insider's View (Washington: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1985), p. 23.

311. Hermann Field, interview with the author, Appendix C.

Eastern Europe in Eisenhower's Foreign Policy

In 1952 the American electorate ended the Democratic Party's twenty-year hold on the White House by electing World War II hero Dwight Eisenhower as President. Eisenhower's principal foreign policy advisor during the campaign and as President was John Foster Dulles, a strong advocate of greater American efforts to liberate Eastern Europe from the hands of the Communists. Throughout the 1952 campaign Dulles scathingly and repeatedly attacked the Truman Administration for having failed to take any steps to free the satellites, and pledged that under Eisenhower things would be different. At Dulles' direction, the foreign policy plank of the Republican Party platform included the following assertion:

The policies we espouse will revive the contagious, liberating influences which are inherent in freedom. They will inevitably set up strains and stresses within the captive world which will make the rulers impotent to continue in their monstrous ways and mark the beginning of the end.³¹²

For his part, Eisenhower was much more restrained in his rhetoric and argued that liberation would have to be peaceful, although he never dwelled at any great length on the issue. Eisenhower left it to others, particularly the Republican nominee for Vice President, Richard Nixon, to handle the political dirty work. Perhaps the best known accusation of the campaign came when Nixon

312. Cited in Kovrig, The Myth of Liberation, pp. 112-113. Kovrig's chapter, "Variations on Liberation" is an excellent examination of Foster Dulles' views on Eastern Europe. For a taste of Dulles' own words, see Dulles, "A Policy of Boldness," Life 32 (May 19, 1952).

charged that Adlai Stevenson, the Democrats' choice for President, was a graduate of Dean Acheson's "Cowardly College of Communist Containment."³¹³ When the Eisenhower-Nixon ticket won the general election handily in November, even voters who kept in mind Eisenhower's call for only "peaceful liberation" could not have been faulted for having expected a new effort to bring down the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe. What many Americans did not know was that even Foster Dulles already had ruled out the possibility that the United States should work to promote revolutions against the East European Communist regimes:

"Activation" does not mean open revolt. The people have no arms, and violent revolt would be futile, for it would precipitate massacre. . . . We have no desire to weaken the Soviet Union at the cost of the lives of those who are our primary concern.³¹⁴

What, then, remained? Exactly what form was "Peaceful Liberation" to take? Campaign rhetoric aside, neither the President nor his Secretary of State had any clear idea. Nevertheless, one should not presume, based upon this degree of disingenuousness on Dulles' part, that it had been improper for the Republicans to have made Containment into a campaign issue: something very obviously was lacking in Truman's foreign policy if the United States, the world's strongest power, should have no alternative other than to acquiesce limply in the expansion and

313. For Nixon's reflections on his rhetoric and on the campaign in general, see Richard M. Nixon, RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon (New York: Warner Books, 1978), pp. 96-139.

314. John Foster Dulles, War or Peace (New York: Macmillan, 1950), p. 175. Quoted in Kovrig, The Myth of Liberation, p. 109.

consolidation of the sizable postwar territorial gains of the country's Communist adversaries. Yet it is probably overstated to claim, as John Lewis Gaddis has done, that the Republicans' call for the liberation of Eastern Europe was "motivated in fact more by determination to lure East European voting blocs away from the Democrats than from any realistic expectations of 'rolling back' Moscow's sphere of influence."³¹⁵ Just because the Republicans' expectations with respect to the Communist states were not immediately realistic should not imply that those same expectations were unworthy of consideration or that the issue should have disappeared as a long-term policy goal. Rather, the underlying political reality was that many Americans, and certainly not only those of East European heritage, felt that the United States ought to be doing something to try to bring down the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, if only to promote the democratic principles recognized at Yalta.

Where Foster Dulles deeply, if abstractly, believed that Eastern Europe would have to be freed from the Communists, Eisenhower had no interest in crusades. His primary concern was to develop a relationship with Moscow which, while not damaging US national security interests, would reduce Soviet-American tensions. Soon after his inauguration, the new President ordered that a major study, known as the Solarium Project (named after the room in the White House in which it was conceived) be drawn up analyzing three different options of how to deal with the

315. Gaddis, Strategies of Containment, p. 128. Gaddis' view is shared by many of the writers on this period.

Soviet Union.³¹⁶ Task Force A, chaired by George Kennan, argued that the Truman Administration's Containment policy, with certain modifications, essentially still provided the basis for sound national policy. Kennan's group asserted that time was on the side of the United States, provided that the US build up and maintain its military strength and continue large-scale foreign assistance programs. The long-term goal, according to this view, was to cause the Soviet leadership to rethink its commitment to Communism abroad as well as at home:

... the U.S. should seek to convince the men in the Kremlin of the fallacy of the fundamental concepts upon which their policies are based, and without which these policies are neither intelligent nor intelligible. We should try to persuade them, by our words and our deeds, that their delusions regarding world economic and political affairs have already led them into absurd follies. ... We must try to make them realize that in seeking to undermine and destroy the Free World, they are in fact steadily incurring burdens and risks which sooner or later will undermine and destroy Soviet Communism. ... We must try to convince them that they can still save themselves and such elements of their material and ideological empire as are consistent with an international system based on freedom and justice, as contemplated in the Charter of the U.N.³¹⁷

316. All information in the next three paragraphs is taken from the Solarium Study itself, from the accompanying "Memoranda for the National Security Council" of July 22, 1953, and from the overview report entitled, "Project Solarium: Summary of Basic Concepts of Task Forces," July 30, 1953. Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas; File of the Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Henceforth citation: DDELlib, OSANSA); NSC Series, Subject Subseries; Boxes 9 and 10. For a discussion of the impetus for the Solarium project, see the memoirs of Eisenhower's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, Robert Cutler, No Time For Rest (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1966), pp. 307-310. Cutler, later replaced by Dillon Anderson, oversaw the workings of the NSC and the NSC Planning Board.

317. Solarium Report, pp. 130-131.

However, as with Kennan's "Mr. X" article, there was little indication precisely how this was to play itself out, how Containment by itself was going to bring about the deterioration of the Soviet empire.³¹⁸ So although Task Force A recognized that there were "a number of actual or potential weaknesses" in the Communist bloc which could be "aggravated or exploited," it was highly wary of trying to do so, stressing that political warfare behind the Iron Curtain ran the risk of resulting in nothing more than the "dissipation of our resources, the forewarning of our adversaries and the alarming of our allies."³¹⁹

Task Force B, chaired by Army Major General James McCormack, developed many of the ideas which would be included in President Eisenhower's "New Look" defense policies. McCormack's group argued that while time was not automatically on the side of the United States, "changes in the Soviet Bloc, and in the balance of basic forces in the world, can be made to serve the cause of freedom." The United States, Task Force B stressed, should

318. Compare, for instance, the "Mr. X" article:

But the United States has it in its power to increase enormously the strains under which Soviet policy must operate, to force upon the Kremlin a far greater degree of moderation and circumspection than it has had to observe in recent years, and in this way to promote tendencies which must eventually find their outlet in either the break-up or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power.

Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct."

319. Solarium Report, p. 129.

commit itself to the defense of all countries with Communist frontiers: "It is proposed that the line be drawn along the borders of the present Soviet Bloc, filling the gaps in the Middle East and South Asia which are not covered by current NATO and other commitments."³²⁰ According to this strategy, the Kremlin would be deterred from launching an attack on any of these countries by the knowledge that the US was prepared to fight on their behalf, with "the warning of general war as the primary sanction against further Soviet-Bloc aggression." McCormack's group summarized their views into three points:

(1) That any advance of Soviet Bloc military forces beyond the present borders of the Soviet Bloc be considered by the United States as initiating general war in which the full power of the United States will be used as necessary to bring about the defeat of the USSR and the dissolution of the Bloc.

(2) That the United States make known publicly in an appropriate and unmistakable way that it has established and is determined to carry out this policy.

(3) That the United States reserve freedom of action, in the event of seizure of power by indigenous Communist forces in countries beyond the borders of the Soviet Bloc, to take all measures necessary to re-establish a situation compatible with the security interests of the United States and its allies.³²¹

Task Force B addressed itself less directly to the question of how to challenge Soviet control over Eastern Europe, although it was asserted that, if enacted, its policy recommendations would result in a "use of U.S. power" that "will on balance improve the basis for resistance to Soviet dominance in satellite

320. "Memoranda for the National Security Council," July 22, 1953, pp. 20-21.

321. Ibid., p. 21. My Italics.

countries."³²² But in emphasizing that its suggestions called for the "most economical development and maintenance" of US military forces and that "peripheral wars" were to be ruled out, Task Force B did not expect American strength to be used in a manner than would in any direct sense seek to weaken Soviet control over Eastern Europe.

Task Force C, by contrast, sought to translate into policy many of the goals regarding Eastern Europe which had been expressed during the 1952 campaign. The policy of the United States, it was argued, should be to "increase efforts to disturb and weaken the Soviet Bloc and to accelerate the consolidation and strengthening of the free world to enable it to assume the greater risks involved" and to "create the maximum disruption and popular resistance throughout the Soviet Bloc."³²³ Such a policy was seen to be imperative, because "time will be working against us to the point that the Soviet threat will soon become unbearable and the survival of the United States problematical."³²⁴ It was asserted further that "the Soviet

322. Ibid., p. 22.

323. Ibid., p. 24.

324. "Summary of Basic Concepts of Task Forces," July 30, 1953. In my view, Task Force C seriously erred in linking the need to liberate Eastern Europe in such a direct fashion with the United States' own ability to survive. One problem with this approach was that if several years were to pass and American security not completely degrade, then the need to challenge Soviet control over Eastern Europe would be seen to have substantially decreased.

I am inclined to believe, however, that Task Force C was being built up in any case as nothing more than as a "straw man" of sorts, in order that the President could then reject, as too dangerous or unrealistic, any policies which

Union will be capable of dealing a destructive blow to the United States" within five years (that is, by 1958), and that therefore "America's ultimate objectives ... should be obtained during this period."³²⁵ Accordingly, Task Force C argued, the national security policy of the US, as laid out in the text of NSC 153/1³²⁶ should be made more ambitious: instead of claiming that the United States should seek to prevent "significant expansion" of Soviet Bloc power "without unduly risking a general war," the text was to be amended to read that the US should seek to prevent "any expansion" of Soviet power with the stipulation only that the US not "initiate" general war.³²⁷ Moreover, US objectives were defined as, inter alia, "Ending Soviet domination outside traditional [Soviet] borders," "Curtailing Soviet power for aggressive war," "Ending the Iron Curtain," and "Cutting down the strength of any Bolshevik elements left in Soviet Russia."³²⁸ This maximal agenda was to be carried out using all means available, including military steps, covert action, deception and concealment, technological advantages, economic sanctions, diplomacy, and propaganda - all of which were to be coordinated

smacked of Rollback or Liberation. I don't feel that the views of this third group (headed up by General Lyman Lemnitzer) were at any point ever taken seriously.

325. "Memoranda for the National Security Council," p. 24.
326. "Restatement of Basic National Security Policy," June 10, 1953.
327. "Memoranda for the National Security Council," p. 25. My italics.
328. Ibid.

by what was unabashedly called "an executive cold war machinery."³²⁹ The end result would be that the "unbearable" Soviet threat to the United States would be forestalled indefinitely.

President Eisenhower did not have a very difficult time rejecting the recommendations of Task Force C and settling on many of the conclusions of Task Force B, General McCormack's group, while incorporating certain aspects of Kennan's suggestions as well. In fact, the whole exercise seems to have been designed not so much to inform the new President and his advisors of the options available to them in dealing with the Soviet challenge - its ostensible purpose - but to present Eisenhower with a face-saving method for burying any thoughts of liberating Eastern Europe. Within the NSC Planning Board (the body charged with preparing studies and papers for NSC consideration) the accepted wisdom was that there was no hope of dislodging the Soviet Union from its hold on Eastern Europe and that therefore the US should be careful not to raise false hopes among the East European populations. Not surprisingly, then, the

329. Ibid., p. 26. I am led to conclude from much of this that Task Force C, or some important part of that group, had been instructed, or the message somehow conveyed to it, to drastically overstate its case. How else can one explain the lumping together of such potentially attainable goals as the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Austria (p. 35) or the exploitation of Sino/Soviet differences (p. 36) with such plainly unattainable goals as the "curtailing of Soviet power for aggressive war?" The latter goal could have been achieved, one would think, only by what is today known as a "disarming first strike," which no US President - and certainly not Eisenhower - was going to contemplate in peacetime.

men staffing the Eisenhower Administration's foreign policy machinery welcomed the President's rejection of Task Force C's recommendations. With the conclusion of the Solarium study, there was no longer any serious thought given within the Administration to trying to promote "Rollback," although successive NSC studies would still insist that the United States favored greater freedoms for the people of Eastern Europe.³³⁰

The reaction of the President and his NSC staff to the events of 1953 was also characterized by extreme caution. Stalin's death in March was followed by careful statements by Malenkov and other Soviet officials which were taken in Washington as a new Soviet "Peace Offensive." In deliberating over how to respond, Eisenhower drew in part upon a CIA estimate which painted a picture of an unpredictable and potentially reckless Soviet leadership. Although the CIA paper correctly noted that "A struggle for power could develop within the Soviet leadership at any time," that "the USSR is politically more vulnerable today," and that "difficulties [within the Soviet leadership] may be increased by personal rivalries for power which would reduce Soviet strength and the cohesion of the international Communist movement,"³³¹ it was nonetheless

330. See, for example, the interview with General Andrew Goodpaster conducted by the Oral History Project of the International Security Studies Program, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy; Washington, DC, June 1986.

331. Central Intelligence Agency Special Estimate no. SE-39, "Probable Consequences of the Death of Stalin and of the Elevation of Malenkov to Leadership in the USSR," March 10, 1953, pp. 2-3. DDELib, OSANSA; NSC Series, Subject Subseries; Box 5.

intimated that to press the Kremlin at this juncture would be unwise: "the new regime," it was suggested, "will probably find it more difficult to abandon positions than did Stalin and might feel itself compelled to react more strongly if moves of the West confronted it with the need for major decisions."³³² For good measure, the CIA added that "Kremlin control over the European Satellites is so firm that we do not believe it will be impaired merely by the death of Stalin," while "Relations between Tito and Moscow are unlikely to change."³³³ His own inclination to reach some sort of modus vivendi with Moscow now reinforced, Eisenhower instructed his aides to prepare the text of a major address that would call upon the new Soviet leadership to work toward cooperation with the US, universal disarmament, and a settlement in Europe. In the speech, entitled "The Chance for Peace," Eisenhower argued in eloquent fashion for a reduction in East-West tensions, and demanded Soviet deeds, not mere rhetoric, in that direction. Specifically, the President called upon Moscow to agree to an Austrian Treaty and a Korean armistice. But although there were references to the need for a united Germany and for the "full independence of the East European nations,"

332. Ibid., p. 4. It is not always possible to know whether the President in fact actually read a certain document. But Eisenhower paid very close attention to intelligence assessments, and certainly would have done so in the wake of Stalin's unexpected death. Furthermore, one of Eisenhower's biographers makes the specific claim that Eisenhower read the CIA's reports on this question. See Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower: The President (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), p. 92.

333. CIA Special Estimate, "Probable Consequences of the Death of Stalin," p. 6.

there was no call upon the Kremlin to withdraw its armies from Poland or Hungary, nor were there any steps taken either publicly or otherwise to bring pressure to bear on the Soviet leadership at this time.³³⁴

In June 1953, following several months of tension throughout Eastern Europe, a workers' uprising broke out in East Berlin, making apparent in Washington not only the ongoing East European discontent with the Soviet occupation but also the glaring shortsightedness of the CIA's assessment of firm Kremlin control. Ulbricht's regime proved unable to suppress the uprising, and Soviet forces in the country were called upon to break up the demonstrations, in which over 50,000 Germans participated on June 17. With overwhelming force at its disposal, the Red Army succeeded in crushing the bulk of the uprising within 24 hours, saving Ulbricht and leaving the West no time for any effective response.³³⁵ But there is no indication that either Eisenhower

334. In his memoirs, Eisenhower criticizes Stalin for, among other things, "the [Soviet] anti-NATO propaganda" and "the intransigent attitude that all Soviet ambassadors and representatives invariably displayed," criticism which I find instructive. For all of their toned-down public statements and more businesslike diplomatic demeanor, the Soviet regimes of Malenkov and then Khrushchev were as committed as Stalin to the pursuit of the "struggle for socialism" and to the retention, if not expansion, of the Soviet empire. Although Eisenhower found it less objectionable to deal with Stalin's various successors than with Stalin himself, the new Soviet leadership's rule was no less a dictatorship and their grip on Eastern Europe no less an empire than was Stalin's. For Eisenhower's views on Stalin's death, see Dwight D. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953 - 1956 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963), pp. 143-147.

335. Although the suddenness of the Berlin revolt took Washington by surprise, State Department representatives had been

or Dulles had ever been prepared to take any steps other than the issuing of statements sympathetic to the East German workers and critical of the Soviet presence, although Dulles favored exploiting the uprising for propaganda ends. Of course, with very few military forces available in West Berlin or indeed in all of Western Europe at the time, the United States had little military leverage to bring to bear in any case - although without the will in Washington to court a certain degree of risk in pressing its views upon the Soviet Union, the availability of the whole US Ninth Army for deployment to the Brandenburg Gate would have made no difference. At a minimum, diplomatic steps were certainly available: Eisenhower might have taken this opportunity to press Malenkov for a withdrawal from Germany or for negotiations on the German issue, arguing forcefully that the United States supported the Berlin demonstrations and would never

reporting in general for some time on the growing dissent in Eastern Europe. The US Ambassador to Poland, for example, Joseph Flack, wrote to the head of the State Department's Polish office on April 21 to stress that Soviet power was overextended:

It seems to me that the important question is what is the real intention of the Soviet regime and is it politically and economically strong enough of heart to continue to sustain the political and military dominance imposed on Austria, East Germany, and the Satellites. The single mindedness and power of the Soviet government will be immediately under pressure to maintain its extended positions abroad and if, as now seems to be the case, the internal organization is less cohesive than before, it will lose power and show early evidence of waning influence in Europe.

Letter, Flack to Harold C. Vedeler (Office in Charge, Polish, Baltic, and Czechoslovak Affairs), April 21, 1953. Archives 748.00/4-2153.

accept the division of Germany. Or the American ambassador in Moscow might have been recalled.³³⁶ As it was, however, Allied representatives in West Berlin went out of their way to disclaim any responsibility for the events in the city's eastern sector.³³⁷

Less than two weeks after the Berlin revolt, and even as the Solarium Task Forces were still compiling their reports, the President gave his approval to NSC 158, "United States Objectives and Actions to Exploit the Unrest in the Satellite States." The NSC Study listed four objectives toward which American policy should aspire:

- a. To nourish resistance to communist oppression throughout satellite Europe, short of mass rebellion in areas under Soviet military control, and without compromising its spontaneous nature.
- b. To undermine satellite puppet authority.
- c. To exploit satellite unrest as demonstrable proof that the Soviet Empire is beginning to crumble.

336. These steps would have made sense even if the White House had had no knowledge of the factional struggle within the Soviet Politburo at the time, since Eisenhower in that case would only have been drawing Moscow's attention to the fact that its forces were spread too thin. And in an era when the US had a virtual nuclear monopoly and a strong and united government, this would not have been unreasonable. Yet to a great extent, Washington did know that there was turmoil within the Kremlin, as the promotion of Khrushchev and Beria's denunciation of the "Doctor's Plot" suggested. Ambassador Bohlen reported amply on these events, and the Soviet withdrawal of its claims against Turkey was strong evidence of the Kremlin's inability to maintain an aggressive foreign policy. See Bohlen, Witness to History, pp. 347-348.

337. For American policy toward the Berlin uprising, see Smith, The Defense of Berlin, pp. 144-146, and Kovrig, The Myth of Liberation, pp. 132-136.

d. To convince the free world, particularly Western Europe, that love of liberty and hatred of alien oppression are stronger behind the Iron Curtain than it has been dared to believe, and that resistance to totalitarianism is less hopeless than has been imagined.³³⁸

Reading these solemn points, one has to wonder whether the staffers who drew up the document ever sat at the same table as the men who advised the President on how to conduct his day-to-day relations with the Soviet leadership. How could the NSC, in the formulation of its top secret guidance to the bureaucracy, claim that the US sought "to nourish resistance to communist oppression" only a few days after the Administration had shrugged at the Berliners' heroic stand? And what incentive would East Europeans have to protest their overlords' brutality if their protests were to be ignored at the very point at which they began to have some effect? To be fair, the text of the NSC paper was not broadcast to Eastern Europe, but successive statements by Eisenhower Administration spokesmen nonetheless reflected the spirit behind it. Three years later many bitter Hungarians were to complain that they had been led to believe that the United States supported their struggle. What exactly, then, was Eisenhower hoping to achieve?

Some indication of the true goal of the Administration's policy seemingly was revealed in the NSC directive's fourth

338. NSC 158, "United States Objectives and Actions to Exploit the Unrest in the Satellite States," June 29, 1953. DDELib, OSANSA; Special Assistant Series, Presidential Subseries; Box 1. My italics. The bulk of NSC 158, including the various "Courses of Action" by which the objectives were to have been achieved, is still classified.

point, "to convince the free world, particularly Western Europe, that love of liberty" had not died out. It would appear that the specter of brutal Communist regimes suppressing and persecuting the populations of Eastern Europe was to be used to a significant degree by the Administration as a prod to the West Europeans to consolidate their democratic institutions and to unite together for their common defense.³³⁹ The United States, the Administration's thinking seemed to suggest, would work to keep dissent alive in Eastern Europe, but only "short of mass rebellion" (the first point above), since the President had absolutely no intention of risking a military confrontation between the US and the USSR over Eastern Europe. It was in Western Europe that Eisenhower was determined to fight the battle against the Communists, and although the battle there was one which certainly needed to be fought, it need not have been at the cost of eschewing pressure against Moscow on the East Europeans' behalf.³⁴⁰ Nor should the effort to unite Western Europe into an effective military alliance have been allowed unduly to color American policy outside of Europe. While Eisenhower was not necessarily wrong to have rued the fact that "not everyone in Western Europe realized the need for subordinating all lesser

339. Dulles commented at one point to the National Security Council that NATO was held together to a large degree by a "cement of fear," which an American detente with the Soviet Union might reduce. See the Memorandum of Discussion of the 267th Meeting of the NSC, November 21, 1955, p. 10. DDELib, Ann Whitman File (henceforth AWF); NSC Series; Box 7.

340. The President himself referred to the issue of West European unity in the presence of the NSC as "one of his pets." Ibid.

issues to that of achieving ... unity" in Europe or to have labeled the proposed European Defense Community as an "immense need,"³⁴¹ the United States should not have financed the French campaign in Indochina if the main reason for doing so was only to bring France into the EDC.³⁴² Moreover, by disavowing any effort to try to bring about genuine revolts against the Soviet occupiers in Eastern Europe, Eisenhower was ceding the initiative to Moscow and settling for a policy of mere Containment not a whit less so than his much criticized Democratic predecessor had done. In fact, even in March 1956, well after West Germany had been brought into NATO but at a time when turmoil within the Soviet bloc was beginning to grow significantly, Eisenhower's national security policy still insisted that the United States "should place more stress than heretofore on building the strength and cohesion of the free world."³⁴³

The irony in all of this was that part of the thinking behind the Eisenhower Administration's support for NATO and even for the admission of West Germany in 1955 was the hope that the Alliance, as a symbol of European unity and democracy, would come to be a beacon of sorts for Eastern Europe. In discussing the

341. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Mandate for Change, p. 140.

342. Eisenhower writes that French Premier Pierre Mendès-France told Walter Bedell Smith in June 1954 that "He was deferring action on EDC pending termination of the Indochinese War," with the implication that French victory in Vietnam would bring a favorable decision on the EDC. Ibid., p. 401.

343. NSC 5602/1, "Basic National Security Policy," March 15, 1956, p. 8. DDELib, OSANSA; NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries; Box 17. My italics.

importance of NATO, John Foster Dulles praised not only "the development of a West German military establishment which was integrated with the West," but also the fact that, in his opinion, "NATO was the great magnet of free Europe."³⁴⁴ Eisenhower was impressed by Dulles' arguments and elaborated on the theme, as the NSC Staff Secretary has recorded:

Actually, said the President, the Secretary of State really underestimated the case he had made. The unity of Western Europe today, continued the President, would solve the peace of the world. A solid power mass in Western Europe would ultimately attract to it all the Soviet satellites, and the threat to peace would disappear.³⁴⁵

Again, one must keep in mind that the President's remarks were made to the National Security Council - a top secret setting - and not to some campaign gathering of Republican stalwarts. Nevertheless, there is no indication that either Eisenhower or Dulles thought through what he was saying. Just how, one might ask, was the attraction of a united Europe by itself going to cause the Soviet threat to evaporate? What was to become of the Soviet armies in Poland, Romania, Hungary, and East Germany? If the unity of Western Europe had been hailed for its promise in deterring a Soviet attack, then Eisenhower's statement would be completely understandable, since deterrence and collective defense were NATO's prime functions. Yet the President was praising NATO specifically for its role as an attraction to East Europeans, leading one to think that the Administration should

344. Memorandum of Discussion, 267th Meeting of the NSC, November 21, 1955, p. 5.

345. Ibid., p. 10.

not have been surprised when, less than one year after these words were uttered, large sections of the Polish and Hungarian populations rose up against their Communist rulers and looked to the United States and Western Europe for support. Inexplicably, however, the Eisenhower Administration responded to the October 1956 crisis in Eastern Europe by going out of its way to assure the Soviet leadership on at least three different occasions that the United States did "not look upon these nations [Poland and Hungary] as potential military allies."³⁴⁶ But if the rush to reassure Moscow in 1956 that American intentions were benevolent was seen at the time to be the most prudent course, what had become of the view of eleven months before that it was precisely the NATO alliance which would "solve the peace of the world?" Had so much changed in one year? The problem is all the more puzzling since in 1956 no one on either side of the Iron Curtain was contemplating Hungarian or Polish participation in NATO. The truth, of course, is that despite his encouraging rhetoric to the NSC, Eisenhower never stopped to consider just how the peoples of East Europe might react to those signs of Western strength and resolve which his Administration rightfully sought to establish. Neither had the President thought through how the United States should act were an anti-Communist resistance movement in Eastern Europe to succeed in bringing down one of Moscow's satraps and then to appeal to the West for assistance.

346. See Chapter 4.

The failure on the part of the Eisenhower Administration to think through how the US would respond in an East European crisis was reflected to a great extent in the NSC's policy guidelines. In NSC 174, "United States Policy Toward the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe," one of the first fruits of the Solarium Study, two possible courses of action were laid out as extremes to be avoided:

One alternative is to take direct action for the liberation of the satellite peoples from the USSR by military force, either through direct military measures or through armed support of revolutionary movements. Such exercise of military force would in all probability start a global war ...

The contrary alternative is to accept the fact of Soviet control of the satellites for an intermediate period, possibly as a basis for reaching some sort of negotiated accommodation with the USSR, while United States efforts are devoted to areas beyond the present limits of Soviet control in order to block Soviet expansion.³⁴⁷

Although the second alternative was immediately rejected as "inconsistent with ... the right of the satellite peoples to freedom" and incompatible with the aim of "reducing the over-all Soviet power position vis-a-vis the United States and its allies," I would argue that it characterized fairly well the policies which the Eisenhower Administration in practice adopted. According to NSC 174, though, US policy toward Eastern Europe was to be rooted in the "large area between the extremes," in which "Policy ... would be determined with a view to contributing toward the eventual elimination of dominant Soviet power over

347. NSC 174, "United States Policy Toward the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe," December 11, 1953, p. 22. DDELib, OSANSA; NSC Series, Policy Paper Subseries; Box 8.

these peoples," but not "within any given period of time." American objectives would include, therefore, "slowing down Soviet exploitation ... of the satellites," "maintaining popular resistance to ... Soviet policies," and "strengthening those forces and factors which would minimize Soviet assets and maximize Soviet liabilities ..."348 But the crucial question of exactly what United States policy should be in the event of a full-scale revolt in Eastern Europe was left unanswered:

Progress in this regard might bring the question of liberation of one or more satellites to a status of greater actuality and immediacy; any acceleration of or change in the United States policy could then be considered in the light of the situation existing at the time.³⁴⁹

This was pure procrastination, the logical result of Eisenhower's decision to discredit the idea of Rollback through the Solarium project. The Administration's foreign policy advisors were now in effect tacitly admitting that the "middle course" they were advocating could not by itself lead to the liberation of a single East European country.

Perhaps, though, the thinking now ran, the Soviet Union could be persuaded (as distinguished from pressured) to withdraw from Eastern Europe. Almost as an afterthought, it was suggested

348. Ibid., pp. 22-23. During the Hungarian Revolution, however, the Eisenhower Administration seems to have been unable to see any middle ground between military intervention in Hungary and acquiescence in the Soviet leadership's claim of the right to act in Hungary as they saw fit. Despite the confident assertions made in policy papers like NSC 174, neither Eisenhower nor Dulles could see any way to try to influence the course of events in Hungary short of an American invasion. See Chapter 4.

349. Ibid., p. 23.

that just possibly American diplomatic efforts could do the trick:

Adherence to this middle course, though it may preclude reaching any general accommodation with the Soviet Union in the foreseeable future, might contribute to the creation of conditions which will induce the Soviet leadership to be more receptive to negotiated settlements in line with U.S. objectives toward the satellites.³⁵⁰

Emphasis on diplomatic steps on behalf of the East Europeans was a new angle, because Dulles and many of his subordinates in the State Department traditionally had shared a fundamental reluctance to enter into any talks with the Russians, largely for fear of being tricked, outsmarted, or simply outnegotiated.³⁵¹

350. Ibid. Of course, the Eisenhower Administration did not in fact follow the "middle course" it had charted, preferring instead to seek precisely the "general accommodation with the Soviet Union" which it claimed was now precluded. Eisenhower's "Chance for Peace" speech following Stalin's death was a much more accurate representation of the President's views than was Dulles' penchant for disavowing the idea of making deals with Moscow. Moreover, Eisenhower was prepared to participate in the 1955 Geneva Summit with few conditions. See below.

351. Within the government, the view was widely shared that sitting down with Soviet representatives could at best lead to nothing more than stalemate. This conviction is well reflected in Dulles' report to the NSC on his meetings with the Russians in Vienna in preparation for the Austrian State Treaty:

The Soviets had from time to time during the Vienna negotiations exhibited their characteristic trickery ... The trickery was even ... manifest on the occasion of the actual signature of the Treaty. Molotov was supposed to make a brief two-minute ceremonial statement. This he had turned into a 15-minute political and propaganda speech, to which the Americans were obliged to sit and listen.

Memorandum of Discussion of the 249th Meeting of the NSC, May 19, 1955, p. 6. DDELlib, AWF; NSC Series; Box 6.

Such considerations aside, however, the Kremlin surely lacked an incentive to sit down with the US for a discussion of Eastern Europe, its newest piece of territory. One would think that there were only two ways for an American President to liberate Eastern Europe from the negotiating table - the United States could either offer the Soviet leadership something in return, such as the military evacuation of West Germany (and this Eisenhower was quite properly unprepared to do), or insist that the Red Army withdraw unilaterally, with no quid pro quo. To have had a realistic chance of succeeding, the latter option would have required the presence of substantial numbers of US forces in Western Europe and the will in Washington to threaten intervention behind the Iron Curtain - a course which Eisenhower was not at all inclined to pursue. On the contrary, his "New Look" policies (see below) emphasized the deterrence of all Soviet threats through the development of a sizable nuclear arsenal. Large numbers of ground troops were not seen to be needed, and compellent demands upon Moscow were considered out of the question.

The objectives toward Eastern Europe spelled out in NSC 174 were reiterated in several other policy statements, including, most importantly, NSC 5602/1, United States "Basic National Security Policy," which was valid at the time of the Hungarian Revolution. According to NSC 5602/1, US policy toward the Communist regimes was to be based upon the objectives of "lead[ing] them to abandon expansionist policies," "exploiting differences between such regimes to disrupt the structure of the

Soviet-Communist bloc," and "exploiting vulnerabilities within the bloc countries in ways consistent with this general strategy."³⁵² But by 1956 it had become apparent even to a few individuals within the Administration that after three years as official policy, these lofty goals toward Eastern Europe were not being carried out. Undersecretary of State Herbert Hoover Jr., charged with reviewing NSC 174, expressed his frustration before the National Security Council:

... U.S. policy toward the Soviet satellites presented a difficult subject to come to grips with from a practical point of view. In trying to achieve the objectives of this U.S. policy, the Operations Coordinating Board had encountered extreme difficulty in devising effective courses of action. We had achieved very little in terms of concrete gains. Circumstances limited us to "playing for the breaks" and doing our best to maintain the morale of the populations of the satellite states.³⁵³

CIA Director Allen Dulles, however, objected at once to Hoover's pessimism, claiming that "the fact that the Soviets have not succeeded in getting further than they have in their satellite states constituted a gain in some sense."³⁵⁴ Although a hidden observer at this meeting might have wondered how much further the

352. NSC 5602/1, "Basic National Security Policy," March 15, 1956, pp. 2-3.

353. Memorandum of Discussion of the 280th Meeting of the NSC, March 22, 1956, p. 8. DDELib, AWF; NSC Series; Box 7. The Operations Coordinating Board (OCB) was responsible for the implementation of NSC decisions. For an analysis of the Eisenhower Administration's national security decision-making process, see Fred I. Greenstein, The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader (New York: Basic Books, 1982), pp. 124-138.

354. Memorandum of Discussion, 280th Meeting of the NSC, March 22, 1956, p. 8.

Soviet regime would have to get before its occupation of Eastern Europe could be considered successful (was Dulles referring to Yugoslavia?), Eisenhower agreed with his CIA Chief. The President urged his subordinates to "keep up the good work and hope that the Soviet Union keeps encountering additional trouble in the satellites." It was essential, Eisenhower said, "that we keep the hope of liberation alive in the satellites as a force on our side."³⁵⁵

It would seem, then, that Eisenhower and at least some of his key advisors felt that the US was playing an important role behind the Iron Curtain, despite the fact that none of the Administration's own objectives, as defined in NSC 174, had come even close to being achieved. What changes there had been in Eastern Europe by 1956, most notably Khrushchev's condemnation of Stalin at the CPSU Congress in February, had stemmed not from American pressure or intrigue but from the factional rivalries within the Soviet and bloc Parties. Besides, the rapprochement between Moscow and Belgrade could not have been seen from Washington as a favorable development. Nevertheless, the President's optimism of March 1956 was reflected a few months later in NSC 5608/1 (superseding NSC 174), when it was asserted that the "fluid situation in the satellites has increased the previously limited U.S. capabilities to influence a basic change

355. Ibid., p. 9.

in Soviet domination of the satellites."³⁵⁶ It remained to be seen, however, to what extent the United States would take advantage of that perceived opportunity after July 1956.

The ability of the United States to affect the course of events in Eastern Europe was determined to an important degree by the "New Look" defense policies which Eisenhower's Administration adopted. In considering how best to provide for the nation's security in the face of the Soviet threat, the President's prime goal was simply to deter aggression at the lowest cost. Despite Eisenhower's military background, he was in no way an advocate of greater defense spending. On the contrary, he was convinced that if the US were to remain strong, it would have to reduce military expenditures and free up resources for the private economy. The Secretary of Defense under Eisenhower, Charles Wilson, was chosen because of the management and tight-budget skills he had shown as President of General Motors, while the Secretary of the Treasury, George Humphrey (of whom it was said that he feared deficits even more than Communists), was the first Treasury Secretary to sit on the National Security Council.³⁵⁷

356. NSC 5608/1, "U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe," July 18, 1956, p. 4. DDELib, OSANSA; NSC Series, Policy Paper Subseries; Box 17.

357. For a close look at the Eisenhower Administration's defense policies, see Douglas Kinnard, President Eisenhower and Strategy Management: A Study in Defense Politics (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1977); Richard D. Challener, "The National Security Policy from Truman to Eisenhower: Did the 'Hidden Hand' Leadership Make Any Difference?" in The National Security: Its Theory and Practice, 1945-1960, ed. Norman A. Graebner (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Lawrence Freedman, The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy (New York: St. Martin's

Secondly, Eisenhower believed that American military strategy should be tailored around the country's own advantages, not structured merely to mirror Soviet forces. The most prominent US advantage was of course in the area of atomic weapons, and the President was adamant that the US therefore not rely too heavily on large standing armies to make its commitments known. Neither was there any need to accept the adversary's definition of the battlefield or of the means of waging war. During the 1952 Presidential campaign, Eisenhower had already stressed his determination to end the Korean War, where he felt that American soldiers were dying needlessly, and once in office he indicated that he would not be bound by any "gentlemen's agreements" in Korea. According to Eisenhower's own account:

I saw no sense in wasting manpower on costly small wars that could not achieve decisive results under the political and military circumstances then existing. I felt that this kind of military policy would play into the hands of a potential enemy whose superiority in available military manpower was obvious. We should refuse to permit our adversary to enjoy a sanctuary from which he could operate without danger to himself; we would not allow him to blackmail us into placing limitations upon the types of weapons we would employ.³⁵⁸

As a career military man, Eisenhower looked upon nuclear weapons to a large extent only as one more tool available to a commander in his effort to defeat the enemy, not (as later American leaders

Press, 1983), chaps. 6-9; "Eisenhower, Dulles, and the New Look" (chap. 5) in Gaddis, Strategies of Containment. For an early critique of the New Look, see Henry Kissinger, The Necessity for Choice: Prospects of American Foreign Policy (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961).

358. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Mandate for Change, p. 454.

would often maintain) as a category of weapons which could never be used except in extreme emergency. Indeed, in December 1953, JCS Chairman Arthur Radford commented that "atomic weapons have virtually achieved a conventional status within our armed forces."³⁵⁹

Still, it was one thing to threaten to use nuclear weapons in a situation like Korea where one was already at war, and quite another to try to tie the country's atomic arsenal to the prevention of such conflicts in the first place. Yet it was soon apparent that this was precisely the Administration's objective - to deter the Soviet (and Chinese) leadership from all forms of aggression by threatening to respond to any Communist move with an atomic counterattack. Adopting almost verbatim the recommendation of the Solarium Study's Task Force B that "the warning of general war" be used "as the primary sanction against ... Soviet-Bloc aggression," the Eisenhower Administration fashioned on the one hand a defense budget that placed new emphasis on nuclear weapons and on the other a foreign policy that aimed to assure allies and adversaries alike of America's determination to deny the Communists any more territorial gains.

359. Quoted in Freedman, The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy, p. 77. Radford's remark is a worthy reminder of the degree to which connotations come to be attached to certain terms; one's view of what qualifies as "conventional," after all, is highly relative. In March 1955, Eisenhower argued that where nuclear weapons "are used on strictly military targets and for strictly military purposes, I see no reason why they shouldn't be used just exactly as you would use a bullet or anything else." Ibid., p. 78.

Dulles articulated the new doctrine in January 1954 in a well known address to the Council on Foreign Relations:

We want, for ourselves and the other free nations, a maximum deterrent at a bearable cost. Local defenses must be reinforced by the further deterrent of massive retaliatory power. The way to deter aggression is for a free community to be willing and able to respond vigorously and at places and with means of its own choosing. The basic decision was [made] to depend primarily on a great capacity to retaliate, instantly, by means and at places of our own choosing.³⁶⁰

Although the President himself was careful not to use such crisp language, Dulles' speech was a fair representation of Eisenhower's policy. It was quite unlikely, of course, that the United States would truly have responded instantly with nuclear weapons to a Soviet attack against one of the USSR's neighbors (Iran, for instance), but the President was confident that the men in the Kremlin couldn't be so sure. In fact, it was to make the most of such uncertainties in the first place that the Eisenhower Administration put together a series of regional alliances on the Soviet periphery (CENTO in the case of Iran).

In the eight years that Eisenhower was President, there were no Soviet or Chinese attacks against any NATO, SEATO, or CENTO signatories or against any other American allies, suggesting at first glance that the New Look was successful in its objective of deterring Soviet aggression. But in order to conclude that the

360. Quoted in Kinnard, President Eisenhower and Strategy Management, p. 27. Radford felt that Dulles had overstated the case, by leaving the impression that the United States was "ready to pounce on everybody," but Air Force Chief of Staff Nathan Twining and many others within the Administration agreed that Dulles' speech reflected their own thinking.

New Look was the proper policy to have pursued, one must assume that in its absence the Soviet leadership would have tried militarily to overrun Western Europe, Japan, or some other strategic position, and it is not at all certain that this would have been the case. A more careful reading of Soviet strengths and weaknesses might have revealed to the Administration that the Soviet leadership - particularly after Stalin's death - was in no position to attempt any further overland expansion. Hadn't Moscow failed utterly even to crush Tito? Hadn't the Kremlin's toleration of a democratic regime in Finland and withdrawal of claims against Turkey hinted at the inability to pursue a belligerent foreign policy? And when Khrushchev indicated that he was prepared to evacuate Austria, why wasn't that seen as a sign of Soviet caution, if not weakness?³⁶¹ In fact, the Berlin uprising of June 1953, not to mention the Hungarian Revolution, should have been a warning flag to Washington that the Russians were having a hard time keeping even their current empire under control. It should have been apparent that the Soviet leadership was on the defensive, committed to the "fight against Imperialism" only in non-confrontational ways. Seemingly, then, the New Look was the wrong policy altogether. Rather than to have pursued a fundamentally defensive and status quo-oriented policy, the Eisenhower Administration would have been making the most of America's favorable strategic position relative to the Soviet Union (the basis for the New Look, after all) if it had

361. Some in the Administration thought it was. See the next section, Backpedaling from Liberation.

concentrated on pressing for a Soviet withdrawal from Eastern Europe as one of the chief goals of its policy. Even without any American pressure on the East Europeans' behalf, Khrushchev's regime was only barely able to hold on to its glacis, finding it necessary to suppress periodic revolts in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, fight a full-scale war against a revolution in Hungary, and withdraw altogether from Romania. How might the course of events have been different - and to Moscow's detriment - had the Eisenhower Administration set as its goal not the deterrence of attacks which were arguably implausible anyway but the buildup of American and European military strength in Western Europe sufficient to match the Red Army and to provide the basis for insistent and sustained pressure for a Soviet withdrawal?³⁶²

Furthermore, although there certainly was a Communist threat to the United States and Western Europe, it was of a more long-term, more insidious nature, and this the New Look did not address. By yielding the initiative to the Soviet leadership - who could not have expected it - the Eisenhower Administration left Moscow not only the breathing room to crush dissent in Eastern Europe and to speed up its own nuclear program, but also the ability to choose how the struggle would be waged. Khrushchev quickly called for a truce in Europe, and then, under the banner of "Peaceful Coexistence," developed largely risk-free

362. American public opinion of course would not have welcomed the added spending that a buildup in Western Europe would have required, but opposition might well have been diminished had Eisenhower actively advocated such a course.

means, particularly the use of proxies, to engineer Communist gains in several areas in the Third World, most notably Indonesia, Egypt, and India. Elsewhere, for example in Cuba and Guinea, pro-Soviet political aspirants were able to take power. To be fair to Eisenhower, one must note that covert CIA operations contributed toward the defeat of anti-American groups in Iran and Guatemala, a large-scale Marine landing in Lebanon in 1958 helped prop up a pro-Western regime there, and American diplomats and aid missions campaigned hard for the US in the newly independent Asian and African states. But as a strategy which sought to deal with all levels of threat (if a national policy based on deterrence can really be called a strategy), the New Look failed to address the persistent new Soviet tactics that were part and parcel of Peaceful Coexistence.

In 1952 Eisenhower had anticipated this difficulty to some extent when he criticized Dulles' conviction that the threat of American atomic retaliation could be used to deter what today might be called mid- or low-intensity conflict:

What should we do if Soviet political aggression, as in Czechoslovakia, successively chips away exposed positions of the free world? ... To my mind, this is the case where the theory of "retaliation" falls down.³⁶³

Indeed, the NSC policy papers which, as President, Eisenhower approved, periodically called for the establishment of American and Allied forces capable of repulsing enemy attacks on their own, therefore obviating the need for the US to resort to nuclear

363. Cited in Gaddis, Strategies of Containment, p. 128. Eisenhower's italics.

retaliation. "Within the total U.S. military forces," NSC 5602/1 spelled out," there must be included ready forces which ... are adequate (a) to present a deterrent to any resort to local aggression, and (b) to defeat or hold, in conjunction with indigenous forces, any such local aggression ..."³⁶⁴ However, there is no evidence that any such forces were ever developed. Sufficient military forces for dealing with the Soviet "conventional" threat in Europe were simply never deployed (though the incorporation of a 500,000-man Bundeswehr into the NATO command was a good start), while it remained for the Kennedy Administration to attempt to develop a force capable of waging the "low-intensity" struggle. Eisenhower himself made it clear that he was never prepared to place sizable numbers of American ground troops into Europe:

... we knew that the Soviets maintained something in the neighborhood of 175 divisions active in Europe at all times. The United States had twenty divisions, only five of which were in Europe. Therefore, in view of the disparity in the strengths of opposing ground forces, it seemed clear that only by the interposition of our nuclear weapons could we promptly stop a major Communist aggression in that area. Two more divisions or ten more divisions, on our side, would not make very much difference against this Soviet ground force.³⁶⁵

Here, then, was the bottom line. An increase in the American military presence in Western Europe was seen to be not just expensive but wholly irrelevant. This was yet one more example of thinking in tactical rather than strategic terms: if

364. NSC 5602/1, "Basic National Security Policy," March 15, 1956, p. 5.

365. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Mandate for Change, p. 453.

additional military forces were perceived to play no potential role in resisting (let alone deterring) a Soviet attack - and that in itself was a dubious assertion - then they were believed to have no use at all. Whatever political shadow might have been cast by the presence of those additional troops in Europe was not considered important, an omission consistent with the Eisenhower Administration's failure again and again to recognize that a more assertive or daring national strategy potentially might have achieved far-reaching political objectives. The implication of the New Look strategy for American policy toward Eastern Europe was almost automatically that the United States would have no leverage whatsoever. Moreover, not only would the United States remain on the defensive, but its defense would be inadequate. Thus despite all the Republicans' speeches criticizing Containment and calling for Rollback, the idea of "taking the bear by the horns" and making the reversal of Moscow's occupation of Eastern Europe one of the country's national security goals was never seriously attempted.

Backpedaling from Liberation

One of the major problems with the New Look was that even in an era in which the United States had tremendous advantages over the Soviet Union in both atomic weapons and delivery systems (long range and forward based bombers), American military thinkers already recognized that the United States was vulnerable to Soviet strikes and could expect to suffer substantial damage in any atomic exchange with the Soviet Union, primarily because

of the country's imperfect air defense system. This was perceived to be true even for the case in which the US were to strike first.³⁶⁶ While it wasn't openly admitted within the Eisenhower Administration, the implication came to be that except in a scenario in which national survival was at stake, the United States could not in practice use its strategic advantage for any purpose other than deterrence, since in contemplating general war with the USSR, American political leaders were inclined to consider as "unacceptable" far lower levels of damage within the United States than those which, if held at risk in the Soviet Union, were considered sufficient to deter the Soviet leadership from launching a war.

This problem was first brought to Eisenhower's attention in July 1953, when the Strategic Air Command conducted an exercise called Operation Tailwind, in which surprise Soviet strikes against American targets were simulated. In the exercise, American air defense assets performed miserably and the vast majority of the Soviet penetrators were posited to have reached their targets. In 1954, as an effort to address the problem, the President commissioned a "Technological Capabilities Panel," chaired by MIT President James Killian. Although the panel's report in February 1955 made several specific recommendations (such as the development of a better early warning network, which was implemented), its conclusion was that the United States could

366. For elaboration on this point, see David Alan Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill," in Graebner, The National Security: Its Theory and Practice, 1945-1960, pp. 150-155.

never be completely invulnerable to a surprise Soviet attack.³⁶⁷ A second report of February 1955, a study by the Air Force's Weapons System Evaluation Group, claimed that even an American first strike could not guarantee that there would be no Soviet retaliation against the United States: even if SAC succeeded in destroying all of the 645 Soviet airfields it had targeted, the WSEG report argued, there would be at least 240 bases remaining from which Soviet bombers could survive attack.³⁶⁸ In June 1955, in Operation Alert, another Soviet attack was simulated, in this case with substantial warning time. The results were no more encouraging, however, as over 50 US cities were bombed in the simulation and over 40 million Americans killed, injured, or left homeless. Eisenhower, participating in the exercise, was forced to declare martial law over the ravaged country.³⁶⁹ Perhaps these exercises were somewhat unrealistic in assigning to the Soviet bomber force extremely high performance levels (and in assuming one-way missions), but the conclusion was nonetheless inescapable that under existing conditions the United States was vulnerable to a Soviet second strike.

The implications for the New Look were devastating, though most officials in the Administration refused to acknowledge it. How credible could the American pledge to "retaliate massively" to Communist aggression possibly be if by its own (albeit

367. Freedman, The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy, p. 158.

368. Cited in Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill," p. 151.

369. See Ambrose, Eisenhower: The President, p. 256.

private) admission the government recognized that the United States would suffer extensively in return? The problem was made all the worse because between 1954 and 1957 the Administration was well aware that the Soviet Union was rapidly enlarging its bomber fleet and was making progress in ICBM technology.³⁷⁰

Despite the confident public statements by John Foster Dulles and other architects of the New Look, then, the Administration quietly had reached the conclusion that even the overwhelming American nuclear advantage in practice had only limited utility. Beginning with the results of Operation Alert in 1955, the Administration's promise of massive retaliation was intended only as a deterrent. Were Soviet or Soviet-backed forces to go ahead despite of the US threats and actually launch an invasion somewhere, then Eisenhower would decide at that point how to react, but there was to be no automatic retaliation. Of course, the matter might have been remedied to some degree by the placement of large numbers of US ground forces into those areas, such as Western Europe, which were perceived to be threatened. But in part because of perceived public opposition, no such step was taken, and the New Look "Trip Wire" remained official policy for the duration of the Eisenhower Administration.

Even though the absence of substantial American ground forces in Europe made Republican campaign pledges to work toward

370. For an examination of the extent to which the Eisenhower Administration was aware of various strategic developments in the USSR, see John Prados, The Soviet Estimate: U.S. Intelligence Analysis and Soviet Strategic Forces (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 58-79.

the liberation of Eastern Europe sound hollow in retrospect, and even though the government's commitment to the New Look implied that US foreign policy would remain on the defensive, the Eisenhower Administration, particularly in its first term, could certainly still have made an effort to bring diplomatic pressure against the Soviet leadership. Although with no strong United States military presence in the wings, such pressure by definition would have been somewhat toothless, it nevertheless might possibly have led the Soviet leaders to rethink to some degree their policies in Eastern Europe, if only because unlike the leaders of the United States, the Soviet leadership was acutely conscious of the value of American nuclear weapons. According to János Radványi, an official of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry who had dealings with the Soviet regime, Khrushchev took the United States nuclear arsenal extremely seriously:

In the course of private conversations at which I was present, the Soviet premier always felt it necessary to explain that the Soviet leadership had to take into account the possible effect on Soviet actions of the U.S. nuclear striking ability. Khrushchev probably remembered that Eisenhower had used the nuclear threat successfully at the end of the Korean conflict in order to achieve favorable terms for an armistice.³⁷¹

Radványi prefaced this by saying that in his opinion "Khrushchev had never considered as a real threat the Dulles plan of building up and assisting East European resistance movements," which was an appropriate conclusion from the Soviet point of view in the wake of Eisenhower's reluctance and inability to take advantage

371. Radványi, Hungary and the Superpowers, p. 11.

of the Berlin uprising of 1953.³⁷² Still, that did not mean that Foster Dulles' public emphasis on liberating Eastern Europe need never have been taken seriously in Moscow. Were Eisenhower and his advisors to have matched their campaign rhetoric with a diplomatic or "behind-the-scenes" commitment to pressing the Kremlin for withdrawal from parts of Eastern Europe, or at least for political changes in certain areas, then the US call for liberty in the satellite countries would have had far more credibility. After all, the motivation behind both Malenkov's "New Course" and Khrushchev's policy of "Peaceful Coexistence" was a recognition that Soviet forces were overextended and that the Soviet Union could not continue to compete with the United States without some sort of agreement in Central Europe. Persistent American diplomatic pressure in this period therefore might well have reinforced those elements within the Soviet Party and State apparatus who were already arguing that the East Europeans should be given greater control over their own affairs. This was particularly true in 1953, when Malenkov engineered Imre Nagy's accession to the Premiership in Hungary, and in 1955, when Khrushchev's readiness to evacuate Austria removed the pretext for the presence of Soviet troops in Hungary and Romania.

The coming to power of Imre Nagy in Hungary in June 1953 (shortly before the Berlin uprising) was the first test of the

372. The termination at the same time of a covert effort to overthrow Enver Hoxha's regime in Albania no doubt contributed to the Soviet leaders' inclination not to take American calls for the liberation of Eastern Europe seriously. See the next section.

Eisenhower Administration's willingness to press for changes in Eastern Europe. Nagy's rise to power could not have taken Washington completely by surprise, since in the weeks after Stalin's death the US Minister in Hungary, Christian Ravndal, had reported on several occasions that at least one faction in Moscow seemed to be at odds with Rákosi. Given such circumstances, Ravndal argued, the United States "could well add to [the] potential unreliability of Hungary as [a] Russian satellite" by playing upon the growing rivalry.³⁷³ Ravndal did not specify just how the US should aggravate the feud, but in June it became apparent that, through no effort on the part of the United States, the rivalry within the Hungarian Party was to be cemented in place, thanks to the decision of the new Soviet "Collective Leadership" to install Imre Nagy as Hungarian Premier. The decision, taken during the Hungarian leadership's sudden summons to Moscow and seemingly at Malenkov's direction, opened a two-year phase in which the leaders of the Hungarian Party and government vied for control. From the vantage point of the State Department officers in Budapest, this split afforded the US new opportunities: shrill statements by Rákosi and his supporters, the Legation reported, indicated the regime's "genuine fear [of] western abilities [to] exploit party confusion and popular

373. USBudapest 972, May 12, 1953. Archives 764.00/5-1253. The US mission in Budapest had the status only of a Legation, and was therefore not headed up by an Ambassador. The situation was the same with the Hungarian mission in Washington.

unrest," fears which the Legation considered well founded.³⁷⁴ In the Legation's view, the American interest would best be served by endorsing Nagy's New Course and working to undermine Rákosi, though without going so far as to risk endangering American diplomatic relations with Budapest. It was suggested that the United States stress the bankruptcy of Rákosi's policies, contrast Nagy's positions with those of Rákosi, and in general try to "ridicule" Rákosi.³⁷⁵ In Washington these themes were adopted and broadcast into Hungary by the Voice of America, the government's radio service, but the Secretary of State would not approve more forceful steps. In fact, none of the leading figures of the Eisenhower Administration was prepared to bring serious pressure on the Kremlin to expand the New Course in Hungary, let alone to evacuate the country. To the extent that the question had been addressed and translated into policy, it seems clear that the Administration's goal was more to try to weaken the Communists' hold over Hungary than to encourage the establishment of an underground or an insurgency.

In a letter to Béla Varga, the President of the Hungarian National Council (an émigré organization centered in the US), John Foster Dulles would say only that he sympathized with the Hungarians' struggle:

I have the greatest admiration for their courage and determination and I am convinced that by maintaining their firm stand they can compel increased concessions from the Kremlin and the Kremlin puppets who now

374. USBudapest 40, July 16, 1953. Archives 764.00/7-1653.

375. Ibid.

control the powers of government. ... Failure or refusal on the part of the Communist regimes to fulfill promises which they have now made can only add to the insecurity of their position.³⁷⁶

Dulles was careful (as he naturally would be in an unclassified communication) not to mention whether the United States would itself take any steps to exploit the process by which those same Communist regimes would be made more insecure (although Varga, who knew something about how the government operated, undoubtedly concluded that the US would do little of any consequence), but in the secret councils of the State Department no efforts to support the New Course were adopted. Even though various NSC directives called upon the government to try to undermine the satellite regimes and to exploit differences between those regimes and the Soviet Union, there is no evidence that State Department personnel in any of the East European capitals, including Moscow, were ever instructed to take concrete steps either in support of the New Course or in favor of any alternatives to the region's Communist regimes.

Such, at least, is the consensus view of the many State Department officials who handled East European affairs between 1953 and 1956.³⁷⁷ According to Jacob Beam, for example, the

376. Dulles to Varga, July 9, 1953. Archives 764.00/7-953.

377. And in my research at the National Archives, I was not able to uncover a single directive from the State Department to any of its East European missions instructing the diplomats there to do their best to try to undermine the satellite regimes. Although I cannot claim that this was an exhaustive or definitive search (many documents, after all, are still classified), I see no basis for expecting any major surprises in the remaining material.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Soviet and East European Affairs for much of this period, Dulles never placed the same emphasis within the State Department on the need to liberate Eastern Europe as he had in the 1952 Presidential campaign; indeed, the Secretary referred to the whole issue less and less often after 1953.³⁷⁸ Tom Rogers, the chief Political Officer in the Budapest Legation and to a large extent therefore the "point man" for American policy toward Hungary, is convinced that the State Department made no effort whatsoever to endorse the New Course or to support any of Nagy's policies:

I don't think that the United States had a policy toward Hungary at all. ... We received almost no instructions from Washington that commented upon the New Course, except for periodic guidance from the intelligence bureaus outlining their information requirements. ... In general, communication between Washington and the Legation on developments within Hungary was a one-way street, with most of the talking coming from our end. But as far as the broader question is concerned, I think that Dulles' call for liberation was mostly just campaign rhetoric. The proof of the pudding was that when the opportunity came, in 1956, nothing was liberated. Moreover, liberation was a goal that was never conceptually related to liberalization: I would be very surprised if Dulles ever envisioned a Communist country evolving, as in the case of China today, into a country with which the United States could develop close relations. ... I don't recall a single indication, during any of my four years in the Legation in Budapest, that Washington gave any thought at all to coaxing Hungary into a posture similar to that of Yugoslavia.³⁷⁹

Nor was the perspective very different within the US missions in the other bloc capitals, where - with the possible exception of

378. See the author's interview with Ambassador Beam, Appendix B.

379. For the full text of Rogers' comments, see his interview with the author, Appendix O.

Poland - there was even less room for anti-regime maneuvering after 1953 than in Hungary. George Lister, the officer in charge of the Polish Desk during these years, could not bring to mind even one Department directive that in any fashion attempted to translate into genuine action the Administration's public call for the liberation of Eastern Europe. In Lister's words, "nothing was done to try to achieve 'Rollback' in any way."³⁸⁰ Rogers' deputy in the Budapest Legation's Political Section, Gáza Katona, also agrees, saying that the State Department "never had a clear policy" on the question of liberation and that there were no directives calling upon the Legation to try to cause difficulties for the Hungarian Communists. The view of most officials within the Legation, according to Katona, was that "the US would not play much of a role in Eastern Europe unless the satellites themselves took the initiative," but there was little guidance from Washington on what to do even if they did.³⁸¹ In fact, it would seem that the only way in which the State Department tried to make life difficult for Moscow's stooges in the satellites was to encourage VOA to broadcast anti-regime diatribes, which, while cutting, often failed to distinguish

380. See Lister's interview with the author, Appendix K.

381. Katona adds that officials in other government departments, particularly the Defense Department and the CIA, showed more of an interest than their counterparts at State in trying to bring about uprisings in Eastern Europe, but that they were only "peripheral" actors in the government's East European policy and were not accountable for American policy there. For Katona's remarks, see Appendix H.

between hated dictators like Rákosi and would-be reformers like Imre Nagy.³⁸²

Within the White House, meanwhile, attention on Eastern Europe was focused on ways to deal with the offers made first by Malenkov, then by Khrushchev for some sort of rapprochement with the United States. Eisenhower and Dulles now had to decide whether or not to enter into a summit meeting with the Soviet leaders, and if so under what terms. Following the completion of the Solarium Study, however, the Administration found the prospect of reaching some type of settlement far more attractive than trying to bring down or otherwise undermine the satellite regimes - and did not care to be reminded of its campaign pledges. When advocates of a more aggressive American policy in Eastern Europe (most notably the representatives of the neglected émigré organizations) appealed to the Administration for support, they were usually turned away. This was quite unfortunate, because their views often reflected a solid understanding of what was going on behind the Iron Curtain. In late 1954, for example, one of the leaders of the Hungarian National Council laid out in nearly perfect fashion the course of events which would take

382. On one occasion, for example, the Budapest Legation urged that VOA relay the joke making the rounds in Hungary that in fact there were free elections in Hungary - "one may choose between gas, water, and electricity." USBudapest 570, March 31, 1954. Archives 764.00/3-3154. VOA and RFE enjoyed plenty of success in making the East European regimes look bad, but to what end? Again, the government's goals seem never to have been very carefully thought through. For the broadcast policies of Radio Free Europe, see below.

place over the next two years in Hungary. According to the State Department's official Memorandum of Conversation:

[Hungarian National Council leader Zoltán] Pfeiffer predicts that the winter of 1955-1956 will be a crucial time in Hungary ... He believes that at this time Rákosi will step in and attempt to re-institute programs in effect prior to June 1953. The Rákosi reversion program cannot be effectuated, however, without re-institution of political terror. The people will refuse to be pushed back to the pre-June 1953 circumstances, and therefore will resist as the people in East Germany resisted in June 1953. Pfeiffer believes that this resistance will have some chance of success, even without the use of arms, provided the Western world begins preparing for it now.³⁸³

By the time of Pfeiffer's comments, though, Eisenhower and his staff had lost whatever zeal they might ever have had for challenging Moscow's occupation of Eastern Europe. Admonitions to the Administration (particularly from East European émigrés, whom the State Department seemed to wish would just go away) to prepare for allegedly imminent uprisings were disregarded in favor of "more pressing" business.³⁸⁴ As far as Eisenhower was

383. Department of State Memorandum of Conversation between Zoltán Pfeiffer, Hungarian National Council, and Mr. A. W. Sherer, East European Affairs, November 18, 1954. Archives 764.00/11-1854. My italics.

384. In fairness to the Administration one must point out that the émigré representatives in the past had predicted quite often that the satellite populations were just on the verge of revolution, leading the State Department officials responsible for those countries to place less emphasis on each new warning. But unlike the boy who cried wolf, the émigrés were not wrong - it was only that the millions of discontented Poles, Czechs, and others were for the most part unprepared to risk their lives in the absence of some good indication that Western support would follow. That revolts broke out even without any serious hope for help from the West in Berlin and elsewhere in 1953 and in Poland and Hungary in 1956 is a measure of the East Europeans' desperation.

concerned, the most important international development by early 1955 was the growing indication that Khrushchev was ready to pull out of Austria, and with such a turn of events in the offing, the President was not prepared to take any risks by raising the "contentious" issue of Eastern Europe.

The irony in this is that Eisenhower and his top advisors were working from a view of the nature of power within the Soviet leadership that was at times not far from the mark. In a briefing to the National Security Council in February 1955, CIA Director Allen Dulles pointed out that Malenkov's loss of the Premiership a few days earlier stemmed not from the failures of Soviet agriculture - for which "he had been less responsible ... than Khrushchev himself" - or from setbacks in Soviet foreign policy, but from the fact that "Malenkov had lost the second round of a great power struggle."³⁸⁵ It was also recognized that "the struggle for supreme power would continue, with Khrushchev playing the cagy Stalin game of slowly consolidating his power against his rivals" and that "it was quite likely that Malenkov would gradually disappear from view." Still, the CIA was probably going too far in its assessment that "this may be the beginning of the end of the period of collective leadership in the USSR."³⁸⁶ The CIA at this point may well have been trying to overcompensate for the low estimation of Khrushchev which previously seems to have been widely shared throughout the

385. Memorandum of Discussion of the 236th Meeting of the NSC, February 11, 1955, p. 3. DDELlib, AWF; NSC Series; Box 6.

386. Ibid., pp. 3-4.

Administration.³⁸⁷ Whether the Administration was able to identify which faction in Moscow held the upper hand or was associated with which policies was actually less important than the recognition in the first place that Soviet policy was largely the result of factional rivalries within the Soviet Party. What Eisenhower's officials never quite acknowledged was that since at any given time in Moscow there was probably both an assertive and a more cautious faction in competition, then it was in the American interest to take the initiative on East-West issues in order to help keep the forward Soviet faction from prevailing.

When the issue of the proposed Austrian Treaty came up for the NSC's consideration, the CIA Director was on the mark again, noting that the Soviet willingness to evacuate Austria not only reflected "greater flexibility in Soviet policy," but also "perhaps indicated a greater degree of weakness" on the Soviet side.³⁸⁸ Allen Dulles' observation was highly significant, because it should have reminded the NSC that even without huge armies on the Continent, the United States - by virtue of its large nuclear arsenal, booming economy, united leadership, and strong allies - still held the upper hand in Europe. With a certain prescience, Dulles added that "the Soviet move [out of

387. Only three months earlier, for example, Ambassador Bohlen had reported from Moscow that "Khrushchev ... as far as I could gather is not (repeat not) especially bright." USMoscow 725, November 8, 1954. Archives 611.61/11-854. Bohlen's parentheses.

388. Memorandum of Discussion of the 245th Meeting of the NSC, April 21, 1955, p. 2. DDELib, AWF; NSC Series; Box 6. My italics.

Austria] would entail very considerable risks for the Soviet position in the European satellites,"³⁸⁹ leaving the NSC with the unmistakable impression that there was now an important opening for American policy to exploit. A few weeks later, moreover, John Foster Dulles told the same gathering that he now also believed the Kremlin to be operating from a policy of weakness: "the Russians," he said, "were in some respects overextended and overcommitted. ... In part also the Soviets had come to recognize that their external policy was a failure and bankrupt."³⁹⁰ Although his second statement was probably unduly sweeping, the Secretary of State was right on the money in perceiving that Soviet forces had been spread too thin. "Indeed," Foster Dulles continued, echoing his brother's earlier point, "by virtue of their action in Austria the Soviets may be losing forces in the satellite states which they would be unable to control."³⁹¹ Thus armed with a rare understanding of what was at stake, the Administration now faced the question of whether to accept the Soviet offer for an accommodation or in some way to try to increase the pressure which (through no direct effort on Eisenhower's part) the Soviet regime seemed to be feeling.

389. Ibid. Of course, the Four Power withdrawal from Austria also brought with it Western disadvantages. During the Hungarian Revolution, American troops were now too far removed from the border of Hungary to be of any potential assistance.

390. Memorandum of Discussion, 249th Meeting of the NSC, May 19, 1955, p. 8.

391. Ibid.

The most immediate problem was whether or not to sign the Austrian Treaty. The Joint Chiefs of Staff objected to the proposed agreement, arguing that the United States ought not become a party to any four-Power guarantee of Austrian neutrality. The position of the military was that in order for American objectives toward Austria to be achieved,

it is essential that the occupation in Austria be terminated under conditions which ... will enable Austria to make a substantial contribution to its own defense, and ... will leave Austria free to coordinate effectively with the West in defense planning. ... if Austria is to make a unilateral declaration that it will enter into no military alliances and permit no foreign bases on its territory, her freedom to coordinate with the West in defense planning will be greatly restricted. Any efforts by the Allies in this respect, even on a covert basis, will have to be postponed.³⁹²

The Chiefs were well aware that by evacuating their occupation zones in Tyrol and central Austria, the Western Allies would be leaving a crucial land and air gap between the northern and southern tiers of NATO, a problem that would have no parallel in the Soviet pullout from eastern Austria. Eisenhower sympathized with the Chiefs, but would not allow the military's desire to maximize American interests in Austria to stand in the way of a treaty. Nor was the President prepared to press the Kremlin for a commitment to withdraw its troops from Hungary and Romania if

392. JCS Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, "NSC Action on the Austrian Treaty," April 22, 1955, pp. 1-2. For an account of the decade-long process by which the Austrian Treaty was negotiated, see William Lloyd Stearman, The Soviet Union and the Occupation of Austria (Bonn: Siegler & Company KG, 1962).

taking such a stance meant risking the agreement.³⁹³ The Secretary of State was dispatched to Vienna with instructions to do his best to try to meet the Chiefs' objections, but with authority to do "as he deems necessary to avoid placing the U. S. in the position of blocking a treaty."³⁹⁴ Dulles succeeded in short order in wrapping up the negotiations with the Soviet team in Vienna (with no provision included for US military rights), and on May 15, 1955 the Austrian State Treaty was signed with great fanfare.

Eisenhower's goal in pushing so hard for the Austrian Treaty had far less to do with his concern for the military balance or the political arrangements in Central Europe than with his desire

393. Shortly before the Geneva summit, the Hungarian Ambassador to Czechoslovakia, Imre Horváth, told his American counterpart, U. Alexis Johnson, that "there was no doubt that the remaining Soviet troops in Hungary would be withdrawn following [the] withdrawal of Soviet forces from Austria." This was hardly the usual Party line, and the fact that Horváth - one of Rákosi's supporters - felt able to make such a statement reflects the extent to which the overextension of Soviet power in Eastern Europe was openly apparent. Horváth may have been trying to convince Johnson that the Soviets had already decided to evacuate Hungary, in order to prevent the US from raising the issue at Geneva. Foreign Service Despatch, USPrague 479, June 15, 1955. Archives 764.00/6-1555.

394. Memorandum of Discussion, 245th Meeting of the NSC, April 21, 1955, p. 13. The Chiefs' objections were initially presented at this meeting, although their Memo to the Secretary bears the next day's date.

Sending John Foster Dulles himself to Vienna to work out the last few "details" of the treaty was a serious mistake, since a Secretary of State will never want to haggle for days, let alone weeks, over seemingly "minor" points. But the issue is probably beside the point, because in my view Eisenhower never had any intention of pushing for Western military rights in Austria, let alone for a Soviet withdrawal from Hungary.

for a rapprochement with the Soviet leadership. In his memoirs, Eisenhower claimed that he was by nature always opposed to summit meetings, but that "Because of the Soviet's action [in Austria], and not wishing to appear senselessly stubborn ... I instructed Secretary Dulles to let it be known" that the US was prepared to consider a summit.³⁹⁵ The truth is that ever since his "Chance for Peace" speech in April 1953, if not from the time of his inauguration, the President was more than ready to sit down with the Soviet leaders, provided only that they first showed their commitment to improving relations with the United States and with the West in general. In withdrawing from Austria, the Kremlin apparently satisfied the Administration's requirement for "deeds, not words," and gave Eisenhower "logical reason to hope that [through a summit] the world situation would be thereby improved."³⁹⁶ The President's own readiness to participate in a summit was backed up at this juncture by John Foster Dulles, who

395. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Mandate for Change, p. 506. Eisenhower's reasoning for not holding a summit - which he himself disregarded - still sounds perfectly convincing:

... the possibility of a conference involving the United States and the U.S.S.R. was suggested frequently ... apparently under the impression that through face-to-face negotiations the Communists could be led to abandon their most dangerous doctrines, especially that of promoting class conflict throughout the world and trying to achieve global domination in the ensuing turmoil. Few of my associates urged me to seek a "Summit"; indeed, almost without exception they were opposed to the idea.

Ibid., p. 504.

396. Ibid., p. 505.

although by instinct an opponent of summitry, now seemed to believe that the very fact that the Russians were pulling out of Austria would by itself somehow cause the Soviet presence in Eastern Europe to collapse:

... the Soviets had effected a complete alteration of their policy. Their policy had been hard and was becoming soft. The Iron Curtain is going to disappear. In the future there will be no more sharp line between the free world and the Soviet bloc. The sharp line will be replaced by a fuzzy area.³⁹⁷

Allen Dulles, as usual more concerned with the nuts and bolts of the matter, wondered whether his brother was implying that "the physical Iron Curtain was going to disappear," or that "the barbed wire and other fortifications along the satellite borders would vanish." To this the Secretary of State replied with an ambiguity just as confident as before:

Secretary Dulles said that he had not meant to imply the physical disappearance of the Iron Curtain, but rather that the Soviets would fuzz up the old line between their satellites and the West with a kind of mixed zone.³⁹⁸

Dulles did not specify in just what way this mixed zone was to be "mixed" if it was still occupied by the Red Army, nor did he say which countries he had it mind. To his credit, however, he warned that if the Soviet leaders "manage to behave decently" in the eyes of the West Europeans (such as proposing summits) there was a risk that they would achieve "considerable success," which

397. Memorandum of Discussion, 249th Meeting of the NSC, May 19, 1955, p. 8.

398. Ibid. The wording here, and in all of the National Security Council Memoranda of Discussion is that of the NSC Staff Secretary.

was why "the United States and the West [must] take the propaganda and diplomatic offensive."³⁹⁹ Yet without mentioning exactly what he had in mind (one suspects that the term "diplomatic offensive" referred to nothing more than public statements coordinated with our allies deploring Soviet practices in the Eastern Europe), Dulles turned in almost the next breath to the preparations for the Geneva Summit.

Despite their own past statements, then, Eisenhower and his advisors agreed to sit down with Khrushchev and Bulganin for the first Soviet-American (actually Four-Power) summit in nearly a decade, even though it was acknowledged at the time that the Soviet leadership had been significantly weakened and Soviet forces overextended. It was possible, of course, that Eisenhower could use the summit to insist that the East European states obtain the same rights that Austria had just been granted, but Eisenhower's desire for a favorable outcome to the meeting would make such pressure all but impossible. Rather than making the most of its perceived advantage to press the Kremlin for changes in Eastern Europe (such as a military withdrawal from Hungary and Romania, which would still have been a reasonable point to bring up), the United States, despite the Administration's insistence to the contrary, would in effect now be helping to legitimize the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe.

399. Ibid. For an insider's comparison of Dulles' and Eisenhower's views of the merits of a summit with the Soviet leadership, see the comments of General Andrew Goodpaster, Oral History Project, International Security Studies Program, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy; Washington, DC, June 1986.

The Four-Power summit was held in Geneva over a four day period in July, and was characterized chiefly by debates between the Western and Soviet delegations over disarmament, the future of Germany, and security in Europe. The President made a formal statement in which he emphasized that "certain peoples of Eastern Europe had not been given the benefit of wartime pledges of their right to self-government and self-defense,"⁴⁰⁰ and members of the American delegation reiterated this theme, but in general the attention of the conference was focused on other areas. Eisenhower was less concerned with the issue of Eastern Europe than with what today would be called arms control and verification. In fact, in order to concentrate on these other issues, the President agreed to "defer talking about the satellite countries and the threatening activities of international Communism."⁴⁰¹ It would seem that Eisenhower's top

400. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Mandate for Change, p. 515.

401. Ibid., p. 523. The deferral turned out to be indefinite. There is, unfortunately, a tendency on the part of American participants in meetings with Soviet representatives to leave at home their criticisms of Soviet policy and to adopt positions of compromise, if not capitulation. In October 1957, for example (to jump somewhat beyond the time frame of this study), as a reassurance to Moscow ahead of time should an "explosive situation" arise in Eastern Europe, Secretary Dulles told Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko:

We believe the Soviet Union ought to have friendly nations and friendly governments along its borders. We have no intention of trying to develop a cordon sanitaire around it.

Coming only one year after the Hungarian Revolution (in which the US acted exactly as Dulles' statement would suggest), this was spineless capitulationism. Department of

priority at the summit was less an agreement with the Soviet Union on any one specific issue (though the best known incident of the conference was Eisenhower's "Open Skies" proposal, which Khrushchev rejected) than overall progress in reducing tensions between Washington and Moscow: "I say to you," Eisenhower told the nation in a television address just prior to his departure for Geneva, "if we can change the spirit in which these conferences are conducted we will have taken the greatest step toward peace, toward future prosperity and tranquillity that has ever been taken."⁴⁰² Eisenhower's deep desire to improve the "spirit" of Soviet-American relations led him to agree to sign a trite final communiqué (which took the better part of three days to work out), in large measure only because "the Soviet delegation wanted ... some kind of 'paper agreement' that would be acceptable to world opinion."⁴⁰³ Remarkably, the President went along with the Soviet side's desire for a public statement of agreement even though he was so angered at the Russians' obvious lack of interest in a genuine discussion of possible steps toward German unification that, according to his own account, he and Foster Dulles came close to walking out of the conference.⁴⁰⁴ Nevertheless, the Four-Power summit was hailed in

State Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and Gromyko, October 5, 1957, p. 2.

402. Quoted in Ambrose, Eisenhower: The President, p. 261. My italics.

403. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Mandate for Change, p. 524.

404. Ibid.

world capitals, (particularly Washington, where an election year was coming up), not as a shouting match which had resulted in a meaningless communiqué, but as the first "thaw in the Cold War," the supposedly trailblazing "Spirit of Geneva."

Interestingly, however, and despite the uniform failure of the American delegation at Geneva to press Khrushchev for tangible changes in Eastern Europe, in the aftermath of the Four-Power July Summit and the Foreign Ministers Conference which followed at the same site in October, leading figures in the Administration again began to stress that Soviet policy stemmed from a fundamentally weak position. As with the preparations for the Summit, though, there was no effort made to take advantage of the perceived Soviet weakness and try to bring about any of the Administration's stated policy goals regarding Eastern Europe. In early November, DCI Allen Dulles told the National Security Council that the shrillness of Molotov's rejection of every Western proposal on Germany betrayed the fact that paralysis had taken over Soviet policy. "The Soviet Union," Eisenhower's CIA Director said, "dared not take any course of action which threatened its hold on the satellites."⁴⁰⁵ Two weeks later, just back from the Foreign Ministers Conference, John Foster Dulles expanded on the same theme, reporting to the NSC that the Soviet delegation there had been able to mask the increasingly tenuous Soviet position in Eastern Europe:

405. Memorandum of Discussion of the 265th Meeting of the NSC, February 11, 1955, p. 11. DDELib, AWF; NSC Series; Box 7.

... it was clear that the Soviets were extremely fearful of the impact of the so-called "spirit of Geneva" on the internal stability of the Soviet Union and the Communist bloc. Whenever, in the course of the negotiations, any subject was discussed suggesting a course of action which would have substantial impact on the stability of the Soviet bloc, the Soviet negotiators not only shied away from the subject - they refused point-blank to discuss it. ... they felt unable to make a single significant concession, for example, with respect to the unification of Germany. This resulted from their evident fear of the effect of such a concession on their hold over East Germany and their other satellites.⁴⁰⁶

Dulles went on to recount how, following the October meetings in Geneva, he had traveled on to Yugoslavia for a meeting with Marshal Tito, who stressed in no uncertain terms that the Soviet position in Eastern Europe was in danger of collapsing. Tito told Dulles that the satellite regimes were "under very heavy pressure for a change in the direction of greater moderation and a more clearly nationalist orientation" (exactly what the Yugoslavs, not by coincidence, had been urging), but that Moscow was supporting the Stalinists (not completely true - Khrushchev was preparing to undermine them), which would lead to a confrontation.⁴⁰⁷ Tito had his own motivations, of course, in pointing out to the American President's top advisor the extent of Moscow's troubles in Eastern Europe, but his accuracy in predicting what might happen is nonetheless impressive: "Tito was confident," Dulles told the NSC, "that the Soviets could not hold out very much longer, and the changes in these regimes would

406. Memorandum of Discussion, 267th Meeting of the NSC, November 21, 1955, p. 3.

407. Ibid., p. 7.

occur in the not too distant future, perhaps in a matter of months or a year's time."⁴⁰⁸ Dulles concluded his comments on Soviet policy in Eastern Europe by noting that "they've got a hell of a lot of problems," but without suggesting what, if anything, the United States should do to exploit them.⁴⁰⁹

As 1956 began there were still no diplomatic initiatives from the United States on the East Europeans' behalf. This failure to take the initiative came despite the fact that the Administration was by now well aware, particularly in the wake of the Czechoslovak-Egyptian arms deal the year before, that the Soviet regime was becoming increasingly active in the Third World, and that this was happening even at the expense of the Soviet position in Eastern Europe. Eisenhower may not have known that Khrushchev had made a conscious strategic decision, as part of his Peaceful Coexistence campaign, to shift the focus of the "anti-imperialist struggle" away from Europe, but the boisterous

408. Ibid. Tito's prediction was more than an uninformed guess; even at this stage Yugoslav agents were in close - if unobtrusive - contact with Imre Nagy's supporters.

By this point Tito had long ago put aside any fears that the United States might try to undermine the hold of Communism over his own country. John Foster Dulles, the man in whom he now confided, was the same Secretary of State who had told the Yugoslav Foreign Minister the previous year that the United States "did not oppose" a Soviet-Yugoslav normalization of relations (and that assurance was made a full nine months before Khrushchev's trip to Belgrade took place). Department of State Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and Koca Popovic, October 18, 1954, p. 2. Archives 611.68/10-1854.

409. That is, at least not in the portions of the document (in this case all but one or two sentences) which have been declassified. But as I said earlier, I do not believe that there are any major surprises, as far as Eastern Europe is concerned, in the still classified sections.

trip taken by Khrushchev and Bulganin to Burma, India, and Afghanistan in late 1955, coupled with the Kremlin's success in "hopping over" the Northern Tier barrier to the Middle East, seemed to suggest that Soviet priorities had moved to new areas. "In practice," the Secretary of State reported to the NSC in January, "the Soviets were squeezing out the resources of their satellites and then turning around to make generous offers to the peoples of the free Asian states."⁴¹⁰ Yet the only decision made by the Administration to try to take advantage of the apparent Soviet shift in emphasis away from Eastern Europe was to play up the satellites' poor economic performance for propaganda purposes.

Reports of growing unrest in Eastern Europe reached the White House with increasing frequency beginning in February, following the convening of the Twentieth CPSU Congress in Moscow. When Allen Dulles summarized the CIA's early version of the results of the Congress, he aptly predicted that the Soviet effort "to replace Stalinist control" within the bloc's Communist Parties, combined with the "stress on peaceful coexistence rather than on the inevitability of war," would lead to "widespread

410. Memorandum of Discussion of the 273rd Meeting of the NSC, January 19, 1956, p. 13. DDELib, AWF; NSC Series; Box 7. The East European regimes, for their part, were fully aware that they were being made to pay for Moscow's adventures in the Third World. On one occasion, Czech Party leader Novotny was so outraged at the low compensation that Czechoslovakia was to receive for its role in a Soviet-inspired industrial project in Indonesia that he refused to meet with the Soviet delegation involved in the project. See the testimony of Jan Sejna in the Oral History Project of the International Security Studies Program, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy; Washington, DC, July 1985.

dangers" for Khrushchev in Eastern Europe.⁴¹¹ Although the DCI expressed the rather oversimplified view that the dangers which the Soviet regime faced were of the "Titoist" variety (the truth was that Khrushchev and Tito worked together in many ways in 1956), he was nonetheless correct to have drawn the President's attention to the growing possibility of new anti-Soviet developments in the satellites. Allen Dulles returned to the changing situation in Eastern Europe a few weeks later, when more elements of Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" had come to be known:

There was also the problem occasioned by the fact that Stalin's detractors had all worked closely with him over a long period of time. It would obviously be very difficult to create a new tradition. There was the problem of Stalin's policies which ... would now be repudiated. Finally, what would the leadership in the satellite states do now? These men were almost all the creatures of Stalin.⁴¹²

The only fault in Dulles' analysis - and in this he was hardly alone - was that he did not appreciate the real reasons behind the Secret Speech. In failing to recognize that Khrushchev's motivation for making the speech was to forge a tool to defeat his rivals and prevail in the struggle for power, the CIA Director, like Eisenhower and his other advisors, missed the key to understanding precisely why the Soviet position in Eastern Europe was being weakened. Although the Administration could see that the East European Parties were becoming increasingly divided, neither Dulles nor any of his colleagues on the NSC ever

411. Memorandum of Discussion of the 277th Meeting of the NSC, February 28, 1956, p. 2. DDELib, AWF; NSC Series; Box 7.

412. Memorandum of Discussion, 280th Meeting of the NSC, March 23, 1956, p. 7.

realized the extent to which the satellite leaders and their deputies were tied to Moscow by factional and personal fealty. The DCI's assessment of Khrushchev's famous speech is a dismal commentary on the Eisenhower Administration's understanding of the Soviet leadership:

Mr. Dulles next directed attention to the question as to why the rulers of the Soviet Union had decided to attack Stalin's reputation in this particularly way and at this particular time. This was a puzzling problem. One explanation, of course, was the Communist penchant for self-criticism. ... Another possibility was that the Soviet leaders had permitted themselves to be pushed further than they had initially intended to go, thanks to Khrushchev's exuberant personality. There was always the possibility, of course, that Khrushchev had been drunk.⁴¹³

Was Allen Dulles now implying that the most important declaration by a Soviet official since perhaps the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was made in an alcoholic frenzy? Although the Soviet leaders were known to be heavy drinkers, one shouldn't forget that this speech lasted many hours and had to be delivered standing up. But what is more relevant is that the Secret Speech was easily the most important address of Khrushchev's career, the opening volley in what he hoped would be the final round of his campaign to isolate and oust his opponents within the Party. The Eisenhower Administration's evident failure to recognize even the contours

413. Memorandum of Discussion, 280th Meeting of the NSC, March 23, 1956, p. 6. Dulles also suggested, with at least somewhat more credibility, that the whole anti-Stalinization campaign might have been designed only to lure the West into believing that reforms were being enacted in the USSR, in other words, as a "'Trojan corpse' which was to be introduced inside the defenses of the free world." Ibid.

of what was taking place in Moscow did not bode well for American policy toward the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Dulles did manage to note, however, that in the wake of the Twentieth Party Congress there was new tension and potential trouble in Eastern Europe and within the Soviet Union itself. There had been serious "student riots" in Soviet Georgia, he reported, although in this case the Communist government was able to restore order by apparently reversing several of its "anti-Stalinist measures."⁴¹⁴ In Eastern Europe, of course, it was the regimes which wanted the anti-Stalinist measures reversed and the populations which wanted the steps expanded. At the conclusion of his comments on the CPSU Congress and Eastern Europe, the CIA Chief correctly pointed out to the NSC that "these events afforded the United States a great opportunity, both covertly and overtly, to exploit the situation to its advantage."⁴¹⁵ This reminder of America's room for involvement in East European affairs, made at the highest forum of the Eisenhower Administration, was the same point which several of Eisenhower's leading advisors had made from time to time throughout the twelve months leading up to Khrushchev's unexpected speech. In no case,

414. Ibid. But according to another account, the demonstrators in Tbilisi were themselves demanding such anti-Stalinist steps as the elimination of one-party rule and the establishment of freedom of speech. Khrushchev reportedly was obliged to travel to Georgia himself, along with Ivan Serov, his expert in regime terror, in order to oversee the suppression of the demonstrations. See Golitsyn, New Lies for Old, pp. 23-24.

415. Memorandum of Discussion, 280th Meeting of the NSC, March 23, 1956, p. 7.

however, had any serious diplomatic pressure against the Kremlin resulted. Covert steps may well have been undertaken to some extent, but ultimately they could not succeed without overt political backing. The only area in which the Administration had felt able to try to challenge the legitimacy of all the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe was in the relatively risk-free world of propaganda, particularly radio broadcasts.

Under the Eisenhower Administration, both the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe, the latter officially under private control, went to great efforts to play up the many shortcomings of Eastern Europe's Communist regimes. Yet there was always an active debate within the government and among the staff of the radio stations themselves (and this debate had begun well before Eisenhower's accession to office) over whether the goal of the broadcasts should be to help lay the ground for anti-Communist insurgencies in Eastern Europe or only to try to ensure that the Communist regimes not be able to consolidate their power effectively. The US Minister in Budapest, who believed that radio broadcasts were America's most important means of influencing the course of events in Hungary, laid out in February 1953 what he believed to be the proper objectives for American propaganda:

1. We can maintain a spirit of opposition and passive resistance to the present regime which will prevent Moscow from putting any real trust in Hungary or have any confidence in the stability of the government or loyalty of the armed forces in the case of war.
2. We can not hope to build up a resistance movement or other type of active opposition which might overthrow the present regime in the foreseeable future.

3. Under present circumstances, we can not hope for a successful defection from Moscow, a la Tito. If following an Austrian peace treaty, Soviet troops were withdrawn from Austria, Hungary, and Rumania, the possibility of fostering a Titoist movement could be re-examined.⁴¹⁶

Others disagreed, however, and believed that the radio stations would be at their most effective only if they broadcast material that eventually might incite the East European populations into rising up against their Communist overlords. According to adherents of this view, the radio services were to remind their listeners of the terrible conditions under which they lived, in effect to follow a line of "the worse, the better." Ferdinand Peroutka, for example, a well-known Czech journalist who had joined RFE, gave a regular "Saturday Evening Commentary" which was widely known for its agitational content.⁴¹⁷ Although guidelines attempting to delimit just how far broadcasters could go were set up for all of RFE's component services, a consensus on the proper nature of the broadcasts was never fully reached. VOA and RFE broadcasts to Eastern Europe in time came to reflect the wide diversity of views on the part of their staffs.⁴¹⁸

Meanwhile, the Free Europe Committee, RFE's New York-based parent organization, launched a campaign to drop leaflets by

416. Christopher Ravndal, "What can we hope to accomplish in Hungary?" Foreign Service Despatch, USBudapest 512, February 12, 1953, p. 1. Ravndal's italics. Archives 764.00/2-1953.

417. See the comments of Paul Henze, the Deputy Political Advisor to RFE in this period, Appendix G.

418. Or, as the chronicler of Radio Free Europe has written, "The basic problem was that while the United States had a goal of 'liberation,' it had no strategy for achieving it." Michie, Voices Through the Curtain, p. 75.

balloon over Eastern Europe, particularly in Czechoslovakia (Operation Veto) and Hungary (Operation Focus). Between 1953 and 1956, literally hundreds of millions of leaflets were released over Eastern Europe's cities and villages, where the Communist authorities did their best to confiscate them.⁴¹⁹ According to Paul Henze, the content of the leaflets "was informative and not agitational, and very exacting standards of accuracy were applied."⁴²⁰ Nevertheless, as with the radio broadcasts, it was never clear whether the goal of the balloon drops was to try to bring about a revolution or simply to keep popular opposition to the Communist regimes alive. William Griffith, the Political Advisor to Radio Free Europe in Munich, was an important advocate of the former course, as this 1954 report to the Free Europe Committee's President attests:

... I think VETO and FOCUS represent the most significant and successful development in U.S. political warfare since FEC [the Free Europe Committee] began operations.

As I suspected ... in July, the Department FSO's did their best to sabotage FOCUS in every way, to the point where I now feel that the FSO's on the desks there are in this instance actually sabotaging the Administration's foreign policy ...

It appears that the desk officers do not believe it is possible to create an internal mass opposition in Eastern Europe - and admit frankly they wouldn't know what to do with one if it were created. I have always thought it well and desirable - as I think you have too. Now I believe we are well on the way to creating

419. In one four-day period in July 1953 alone, for instance, over twelve million leaflets were dropped over Czechoslovakia (using over six thousand balloons. It has been estimated that the total number of leaflets dropped in the three years of the program exceeded 300,000,000. Ibid., pp. 139, 162.

420. See Henze's interview with the author, Appendix G.

one in Czechoslovakia and off to a good start in Hungary. The thought of this being strangled by some third-rate epigones who burn incense daily to the God of Doing Nothing makes me really mad!⁴²¹

Indeed, Griffith's protest against the State Department's reluctance to support the Free Europe Committee's efforts was borne out only two weeks later, when representatives of the American diplomatic missions in Eastern Europe convinced their superiors in Washington not to issue a suggested rebuke to the Hungarian regime for protesting against the balloon operations. The Department's East European section had proposed to inform the Hungarians, and Dulles' office had agreed, that "The Government of the United States ... will not ... interfere with the free dissemination of ideas and opinions that, in its view reflect deep and rightful concerns of the Hungarian people,"⁴²² but a storm of objections from chiefs of mission in Vienna, Budapest, and Moscow caused this paragraph to be dropped. Ambassador Bohlen, for example, criticized the proposed statement on the grounds of "associating [the] US Government too closely with RFE purposes" and "expressing indiscriminate support of all Hungarian emigres."⁴²³ Despite the protests from American diplomats, the

421. Letter, Griffith to C. D. Jackson, October 20, 1954. DDELib, C. D. Jackson Papers; Box 41. Griffith's italics. For Griffith's more recent comments on this issue, see his interview with the author, Appendix D.

422. State 118 to Budapest, November 3, 1954, p. 2. Archives 511.64/10-1554. The same paragraph of the proposed text also said that the US will not "undertake to silence the voice of those thousands of Hungarian émigrés abroad who, no less than their fellow-citizens at home, are vitally interested in the welfare of their native land."

423. USMoscow 704, November 5, 1954. Archives 511.64/11-554.

Free Europe Committee continued the balloon drops until after the Hungarian Revolution, even though some of the architects of the program had begun to question the effectiveness of the operation.

Other offices in Washington looked at the balloons and radios differently. In the CIA, which was supplying Radio Free Europe with the bulk of its funding, "ingenious schemes to use the radios in disinformation campaigns against particular Communist leaders were raised," but in each case they were rejected, at least according to the CIA officer responsible for overseeing RFE.⁴²⁴ Requests to take advantage of RFE's facilities in order to relay messages to American agents in Eastern Europe were supposedly also dismissed. In fact, by 1955 or so the official policy at RFE was to exclude from the broadcasts any material which was seen to be unduly agitational, although many of the East Europeans who worked for the various country services were not happy about that and tried to circumvent the station's guidelines.⁴²⁵ However, on at least one occasion, RFE broadcasts did play a major role in bringing about the downfall of several leading East European Communists. Following Jozef Swiatlo's defection to the United States in 1953 (leaving aside the question of whether he was an American agent prior to that time), he was allowed to go on the air during RFE's

424. See Meyer, Facing Reality, p. 118. William E. Colby, later CIA Director and in 1956 working at the Rome Station, labeled Radio Free Europe a CIA "front operation." Colby, Honorable Men: My Life in the CIA (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), p. 134.

425. For Paul Henze's views on this problem, see Appendix G.

broadcasts to Poland to denounce by name his former colleagues in the Polish security service. Swiatlo's broadcasts had an immediate effect in Poland, where his testimony, complete with graphic accounts of specific cases with which the Polish audience was familiar and of UB practices in general, was widely heard and believed. In December 1954, Polish UB Chief S. Radkiewicz was dismissed, at least one of his subordinates was imprisoned, and the Ministry of Public Security was officially abolished.⁴²⁶ That was not the end of the reign of terror in Poland, of course, but Swiatlo's damning denunciations over Radio Free Europe may well have helped set the stage for the demonstrations at Poznan in 1956 and for Gomulka's return to power.

In general, however, the broadcasts and other propaganda measures of the Voice of America and the Free Europe Committee were not well coordinated with the State Department, whose ambassadors and other officers were never given instructions regarding Eastern Europe in any way commensurate with either the 1952 campaign pledges of Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles or the various NSC directives calling for American efforts to undermine Soviet control over Eastern Europe.⁴²⁷ Despite the Administration's public calls for the liberation of the

426. See Piotr S. Wandycz, The United States and Poland (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), pp. 352-353, and Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc, pp. 240-241.

427. Indeed, just the reverse was the case: State Department representatives in the satellite countries worked diligently to supply RFE and VOA with material, in an attempt to influence broadcast policy along the lines preferred within the US Missions.

satellites, even as fiery an advocate of "Rollback" as Dulles was not prepared to oversee a foreign policy which, if pursued, might possibly have resulted in the termination of diplomatic relations between the United States and several of the East European regimes. Diplomatic pressure in favor of a partial or complete Soviet withdrawal was never attempted, and the establishment of governments-in-exile was considered completely out of the question.⁴²⁸ Only in the area of covert operations was there any tangible attempt to bring about the liberation of any of the East European countries, but even then there was no coordination with other elements of policy.

Covert Operations

Although there was no effective American military or diplomatic pressure on the Soviet leadership with respect to the countries of Eastern Europe in either the Truman or Eisenhower Administrations, from time to time in the years before 1956 there were nevertheless several rather extensive covert US operations underway behind the Iron Curtain. In fact, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was exactly the type of uprising which these various operations in Eastern Europe had been trying to bring about. In the Western Ukraine and the Baltic, for example, where

428. In response to an inquiry as to why the US still maintained relations with the Soviet Union and the East European regimes, Dulles gave the dubious reply that "our diplomatic relationship was relatively more valuable to us in the way of information that the corresponding diplomatic relationship was ... to the Soviet Union." Letter, Dulles to Morton, June 18, 1954. Archives 611.61/6-1854.

partisan resistance movements against Soviet occupation had been going on virtually from the moment the Nazis were driven out, the United States worked to supply and assist the guerrillas. Beginning in the late 1940s, officers of the Central Intelligence Agency selected men from the East European refugee camps in Western Europe and gave them training in underground operations and radio communications.⁴²⁹ The resistance in the Western Ukraine was a major problem for Moscow until at least 1955, and in that period the CIA worked with the exile Ukrainian leadership in Germany to develop Western support for the Ukrainians' fight. Air drops of agents into the Ukraine were organized, and couriers from the partisans risked their lives to keep in contact with the Americans in Western Europe.⁴³⁰ In the Baltic from 1944 to 1952, the Lithuanian Freedom Army (LFA), at one time numbering 30,000 partisans, fought a furious war with the NKVD in an effort to fend off the incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union.⁴³¹

429. More specifically, these and all other covert operations in Eastern Europe in the period were carried out by the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC), a branch of the CIA. Under its director, Frank Wisner, the OPC had a great deal of autonomy. For a depiction of the camps set up for the East European émigrés, see Aaron Levenstein, Escape to Freedom: The Story of the International Rescue Committee (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), pp. 26-37.

430. Harry Rositzke, The CIA's Secret Operations: Espionage, Counterespionage, and Covert Action (New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1977), p. 169.

431. See K. V. Tauras [pseud.], Guerilla Warfare on the Amber Coast (New York: Voyages Press, 1962). "Tauras," who was one of the fighters in the LFA, describes at length the methods that the Lithuanian Communists and their Soviet overlords used in the struggle to consolidate Soviet control over the Baltic. In the end, the LFA was defeated and about 350,000 Lithuanians were deported to Siberia.

Logistical difficulties meant that American support for the Lithuanians could not be as extensive as for the Ukrainians, but the CIA still did its best to stay in touch with the LFA.⁴³² One account, for instance, maintains that American intelligence officials obtained access to the Danish island of Bornholm and used it as a base for flying agents into the Baltic states.⁴³³ It has been claimed that until the LFA was finally suppressed and organized resistance in the Baltic brought to an end, the Lithuanians killed over 100,000 Soviet MVD, NKVD, and regular army troops.⁴³⁴

Nevertheless, in most cases the top US priority in its covert operations in Eastern Europe was not to reverse Soviet territorial gains, or to bring down Soviet rule in Kiev or Kaunas, but simply to gain intelligence about Soviet military activities. The overriding American concern regarding Eastern Europe in the years between 1948 and 1955 was for early warning of any Soviet preparations for a military move against the West. Harry Rositzke, who was the CIA's Chief of Soviet Operations in this period, describes the American effort to penetrate the Soviet Union:

432. Rositzke, The CIA's Secret Operations, p. 168.

433. Nicholas Bethell, The Great Betrayal: The Untold Story of Kim Philby's Biggest Coup (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1984), p. 161.

434. Albertas Gerutis, Lithuania 700 Years (New York: Manyland Books, 1969), p. 392. Cited in Evangelista, "Stalin's Postwar Army Reappraised," p. 128. Tauras claims that by 1949 the NKVD alone had lost 80,000 men in Lithuania. Tauras [pseud.], Guerilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, p. 50.

CIA agents were dispatched into Russia by land, sea, and air from Scandinavia, West Germany, Greece, Turkey, Iran, and Japan. They covered intelligence targets from the Murmansk area to Sakhalin, mostly on the margins of the Soviet land mass, some deep within. Their task was to satisfy intelligence requirements from the Pentagon that could not be satisfied by any less expensive or dangerous means.⁴³⁵

On one occasion, for example, the Air Force requested that the CIA place an agent on each of 2000 airfields in Eastern Europe and the western military districts of the Soviet Union by July 1, 1952. Their mission would be to report on any unusual activity at the airfields and to sabotage the facilities in the event of war, but in the end the plan was dropped.⁴³⁶ On another occasion, in 1952, the CIA trained a special reconnaissance team, secretly launched them in a dingy from one of the Navy's submarines in the Pacific, and landed them near Provideniya Bay on the Soviet Siberian coast, all in order to determine whether a certain Soviet airfield had runways thick and long enough to support intercontinental bombers.⁴³⁷ In Austria in 1951, American technicians succeeded in tapping the lines of communication from Soviet military headquarters in Vienna. The

435. Rositzke, The CIA's Secret Operations, pp. 19-20.

436. Thomas Powers, The Man Who Kept the Secrets, p. 45. According to this account, the head of the OPC's East European division, Frank Lindsay, together with his Chief of Operations, asked the Air Force to explain exactly how the CIA should sabotage an airfield. "We'll let you have that," an Air Force colonel told them, but the military then decided to let the matter drop.

437. Peer De Silva, Sub Rosa, The CIA and the Uses of Intelligence (New York: New York Times Books, 1978), pp. 58-60. The operation was a success - the agents were safely recovered, and were able to report that the airfield could not support more than medium-range, non-nuclear bombers.

intercepted messages allowed CIA analysts to determine, at the time of the Korean War, that the Soviets would not go ahead with a military offensive in the Balkans.⁴³⁸ Similarly, in 1955, American engineers daringly dug a tunnel under the border of East Berlin and tapped into Soviet communication lines in East Germany; again, analysts were able to conclude that no Soviet offensive was in the works.⁴³⁹

Nevertheless, the support of resistance movements in Eastern Europe was still seen to be an important covert objective. In 1950 the CIA, in cooperation with the British, decided to give tangible support to the underground group which it believed was the remnants of Poland's World War II Home Army. This "Freedom and Independence" army ("Wolnosc i Niepodlencosc," or WIN) claimed to have 500 active members, 20,000 partially active members, and 100,000 adherents ready to fight in the event of overt American support. Accordingly, American operatives airdropped "money,

438. Operation Silver. See David C. Martin, Wilderness of Mirrors (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), pp. 74-75.

439. In 1961, one of the British intelligence officers who had helped the CIA put together the operation in Berlin, George Blake, was found by MI5 to have been a Soviet agent. Chapman Pincher has written that the tunnel therefore "produced nothing but a mass of carefully prepared misinformation, interspersed with some occasional accurate 'chickenfeed' to keep the operation going," but I think that might be overstated. See Chapman Pincher, Too Secret Too Long (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), p. 252. More to the point is the observation by one CIA officer familiar with the tunnel project that "the Soviets knew that the tunnel's chief value was in early warning, and they also knew they weren't going to attack." Cited in Martin, Wilderness of Mirrors, p. 101. The Berlin wiretap had revealed a tremendous amount of data on the poor state of East German railroad tracks and rolling stock (Ibid., p. 88.), information which I believe to have been true.

military supplies, and radio equipment" to the Poles who requested it.⁴⁴⁰ In December 1952, however, the UB, the Polish Security service, announced that it had foiled a major American intelligence operation, and a subsequent CIA investigation revealed that the entire WIN network in Poland had been controlled by the UB from the start.⁴⁴¹ The discovery came as a serious shock to Washington, but in fact the CIA had never seriously expected to bring down the Polish regime. Rather it had hoped that the WIN movement merely would help prevent the Soviet forces and the Polish Communists from permanently consolidating their hold on Poland.

One major operation in this period which did aspire to bring down a Communist regime was the extensive covert campaign which the United States launched, in cooperation with the British, to overthrow the brutal Albanian dictatorship of Enver Hoxha. Most Americans knew (and still know) very little about Albania, but in 1948 the country enjoyed a political importance which it probably has never had since. In 1947, as the United States finally took steps in support of the anti-Communist parties in Italy, decision makers in Washington began to be concerned with the Soviet threat in the Adriatic and the Mediterranean. The Communist side in the Greek civil war had received extensive support from the Albanians (as from the Yugoslavs and Bulgarians), and Greek opponents of the pro-Western government in Athens were able to find sanctuary

440. Rositzke, The CIA's Secret Operations, p. 170.

441. Ibid., pp. 170-171.

in Albania. Moreover, the Hoxha regime was known to be extremely unpopular. What most made an operation in Albania an inviting prospect, though, was the absence of any Soviet army divisions in Albania (there were sizable NKVD detachments, however). In the wake of the 1948 Soviet-Yugoslav split, in American eyes, it was going to be very difficult for Stalin to get effective military help to Hoxha if he should need it.

The idea of doing something to unseat the Hoxha regime initially came from the British, in part because it was Britain which had traditionally maintained a close interest in Balkan and Mediterranean affairs. The Albanian support of the Greek communists had been a blow to London's efforts on behalf of the nationalists in Greece, and it was with a certain loss of pride that the Atlee government had been compelled to ask the United States for help in Greece. But even more grating for the British was the fact that it was Britain's elite Special Operations Executive (SOE) which had helped Hoxha's partisans during the war. SOE agents in Albania had arranged for air drops of large quantities of money and guns to Hoxha's forces, even though the weapons were used almost exclusively against Hoxha's non-Communist Albanian opponents and only rarely against the Italians or Germans.⁴⁴² Following the Allied victory in the war, London's

442. Roughly the same pattern played itself out in Yugoslavia, where British support went to Tito's forces and not to those of Mihailovich. See Martin, Patriot or Traitor: The Case of General Mihailovich. Martin presents strong evidence that the SOE, particularly in its Cairo office, was riddled with Communists and Communist supporters. It was largely for this reason that SOE reports from Yugoslavia played up the accomplishments of Tito's Partisans and denigrated

relations with Albania deteriorated almost immediately, and by 1949 Britain was putting naval pressure on Hoxha. In May 1949 two British ships were fired on in the Corfu Channel from the Albanian shore, and in October forty-four British sailors were killed in a second such incident. It was in this climate that planners in Britain's Special Intelligence Service (SIS, or MI6) began focusing on ways to bring down Hoxha's regime. Julian Amery, who had been one of the SOE officers in Albania in 1943, reflected Britain's changed perspective when he decided to become involved in the campaign against Hoxha in 1949:

Stalin was trying to overthrow the pro-Western government in Athens, so I think we had every right to try and overthrow the pro-Soviet government in Tirana, or indeed in Sofia if we so wished.⁴⁴³

Amery and other British advocates of action against Hoxha pushed for government support, and eventually Foreign Secretary Bevin agreed on a plan "to detach Albania from the orbit."⁴⁴⁴ British officials then turned to the United States for support.

The SIS plan was to spark a guerrilla war within Albania by spiriting trained Albanian exiles into the country. The special agents, who would remain in touch with the British at all times, were to play upon the widespread Albanian hostility to the regime

Mihailovich. In Albania the SOE officers in the field were more objective, but SOE Cairo twisted their reports. Nonetheless, one cannot exonerate Churchill for failing to have anticipated in what state Britain's policy of supporting the communists would leave Yugoslavia and Albania after the war.

443. Quoted in Bethell, The Great Betrayal, p. 38.

444. Ibid., p. 39.

and organize an insurgency. With weapons and money, and the knowledge of backing from strong outside powers, the Albanians would then drive Hoxha and his NKVD partners out of the country - essentially the same plan that SOE had employed during the war in favor of Hoxha and against the Axis. The difference in the two operations was that in 1949 the British very much wanted American participation, if only because London did not have the financial ability to mount the operation on its own. When the Truman administration was approached, the State Department readily concurred in the British plan: Dean Acheson agreed that it made more sense to overthrow Hoxha than to try to lure him down the Titoist path.⁴⁴⁵ President Truman is said to have been briefed on the proposal and to have given his approval.⁴⁴⁶ The American side of the venture was to be handled by the OPC, headed by Wisner and Lindsay; their deputies, Mike Burke and John Bross, were placed in charge of the operation.⁴⁴⁷ Meanwhile, the

445. Ibid., p. 114., and Kovrig, The Myth of Liberation, p. 97. This is not to imply that all relevant State Department officials went along with the plan. In the first place, very few people were informed of the operation, and several officials who came to hear of the plans did not feel that attempting to overthrow Hoxha was the proper course to take. See the comments of Ambassador Foy Kohler, interview with the author, Appendix J.

446. Bethell, The Great Betrayal, p. 83.

447. Powers, The Man Who Kept the Secrets, p. 53. In Burke's memoirs, which he himself calls "sanitized," Burke would say only that he was asked to "create a revolution in a communist country." See Michael Burke, Outrageous Good Fortune (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1984), p. 139. Another of the OPC officials who helped run the American side of the operation was James McCargar, who had served in Hungary at the time of the Communist takeover and went by the name of "Christopher Felix." See Bethell, The Great

British had arranged for the use of bases on the Greek mainland and on Corfu, and had set up a camp on Malta for the training of agents. King Zog, in exile in Egypt, agreed to give his support, although many of the fighters who were to be smuggled into Albania would have nothing to do with the royalists' cause.

The government of Yugoslavia, which was receiving American support in its feud with Stalin, was approached about the use of Yugoslav territory in support of the operation. But Tito categorically refused to go along with the plan, telling US Ambassador Cavendish W. Cannon that "It is their business how the Albanians manage their affairs so long as other people keep out of it."⁴⁴⁸ The motives for Tito's stance are not hard to discern. As a Leninist, Tito was not at all eager to see a Communist regime fall from power in favor of some pro-Western democratic political coalition, and the fact that Hoxha's regime used ruthless methods to rule the country was not a concern.⁴⁴⁹ Moreover, as the leader of the Yugoslav state, Tito could not look with favor upon an Albania that might hold any positive attraction to the many ethnic Albanians living in the Kosovo region of Serbia: Hoxha's Albania carried little appeal, but a more open regime in Tirana undoubtedly would. Tito also still

Betrayal, pp. 41, 94., and Page, Leitch, and Knightley, The Philby Conspiracy, p. 199.

448. State Department communication, cited in Bethell, The Great Betrayal, p. 120.

449. Indeed, if regime ruthlessness had been the only basis for Western support of an insurgency, Yugoslavia would have been just as good a candidate as Albania.

hoped to dominate Albania himself, recalling how during the period of close relations between Belgrade and Moscow, Stalin at one point had called for Yugoslavia to swallow Albania altogether.⁴⁵⁰ To assist now in a plan that would leave Albania in the hands of the British and Americans would not advance Belgrade's ambitious agenda any more than would Tirana's status as a Soviet vassal. And given that times were difficult enough, why antagonize Stalin more than necessary? The Soviet threat to Yugoslavia came from the Red Army divisions in Romania and Hungary, whereas Albania was a nuisance but not a serious peril to Tito's survival.

What is more of a problem is why Britain and the United States approached Tito in the first place. Relations with the Yugoslavs were improving, to be sure, but there was little reason to believe that Tito would go along with the initiative. Not only did Yugoslavia, unlike Greece, have no formal security relationship with the US or Britain, but the regime in Belgrade in fact still was pressing territorial claims against Italy. Because of Stalin's campaign against Tito, the United States was beginning to supply Belgrade with economic assistance, but Washington's important military aid program was not begun until 1951.⁴⁵¹ The most shocking element in the approach to the

450. Stalin's encouragement of Yugoslav territorial ambitions was probably only a tactic to draw Tito into a trap, as was mentioned above.

451. Actually, the United States began covertly supplying Yugoslavia with weapons as early as 1949, as Frank Lindsay, OPC's East Europe Chief, is reported to have stated:

Yugoslavs about participating in the Albanian operation, however, was the CIA's disregard of the need for secrecy. Yugoslavia, after all, was still very much a Communist state, in which there were certainly a significant number of Soviet supporters. It was known even in Washington that Stalin was staking his campaign against Tito on precisely those cadres, who were seen in Moscow to be influential doubtless because they were presumed to have found their way into important posts. Thus it should have been expected in Washington that news of Western discussions with Yugoslav officials in Belgrade concerning the overthrow of Enver Hoxha would not fail to reach Moscow.

In any case, the operation was launched without the help of Yugoslavia, and in October 1949 the first specially trained group of Albanians was silently ferried across the Adriatic from Otranto and dropped off on the Albanian shore. Unfortunately, however, most of the members of the group were arrested almost immediately by the Sigurimi (Albanian secret police), while a few succeeded in escaping and making their way to Greece. When the British then tried incursions into Albania by land instead, their agents were no more successful: the Albanian police seemed to be everywhere. The US set up its own training base near Munich, and

It was only in the second half of 1949 that people started to take the Tito-Stalin break seriously. We then started to rearm him covertly. It was a good example of covert action supporting an overt policy. Tito told us that he wanted the weapons badly, but not overtly, because this would give the Soviet Union a pretext for attacking him. We sent him five shiploads of weapons.

Quoted in Bethell, The Great Betrayal, p. 119.

decided that the best method for infiltrating agents would be by air. Accordingly, in November 1950 the first American-trained Albanian agents were flown into Albania and dropped at prearranged points. Yet they did not get very far either, and before too long they were arrested as well.⁴⁵² The pattern was repeated throughout 1951, as successive drops of agents landed right in the hands of the Albanian police.⁴⁵³ In June 1952 the British pulled out of the operation, and after the American drops in 1952 and 1953 were no more successful than the earlier efforts, the US agreed that the operation had been a failure. In April 1954, a massive show trial of the captured agents was conducted in Tirana, and the accused were summarily executed.⁴⁵⁴

The reason why the Albanians seemed to have known exactly where and when the agents would arrive was that the British SIS officer in charge of coordinating the entire Albanian operation with the CIA was a Soviet agent, Harold (Kim) Philby. Philby had first been briefed about the operation in London in September 1949, just prior to his departure for Washington as the British liaison with both the CIA and the FBI, and only a few weeks

452. Burke, Outrageous Good Fortune, p. 151., and Bethell, The Great Betrayal, p. 164. It was decided to use Polish veterans of Britain's Royal Air Force as the pilots in the operation, in order that the role of the US government could be hidden should any of the planes have been forced down. But none ever were.

453. In fact, the few agents who managed to elude the Sigurimi were able to do so only because the pilots missed the drop sites by several miles. The pilots were accustomed to using the lights of the villages as flight guides, but Albania had virtually no electricity.

454. Bethell, The Great Betrayal, p. 192.

before the first agents were to be smuggled into Albania. Before sailing to Washington, he had just enough time to contact his Soviet controllers with the news that landings in Albania were imminent. Once in the American capital, Philby was at the heart of the operation: he met on a regular basis with Frank Wisner, James McCargar and the other OPC men in charge of the Albanian program, and developed a close relationship with James Angleton, the CIA's director of counterintelligence.⁴⁵⁵ Angleton, the man charged with protecting the CIA against Soviet penetration, never suspected Philby, even though one of Angleton's Israeli contacts, Teddy Kollek (later mayor of Jerusalem), told him that before the war he had known Philby in Vienna as a left-wing ideologue.⁴⁵⁶ And because the Director of the CIA, General Walter Bedell Smith, was known to keep Philby in his confidence, mid-level CIA officials did not encounter any restrictions against talking to Philby about Agency business.⁴⁵⁷ Moreover, Philby's extensive social life and penchant for heavy drinking, perhaps more than his station itself, made him a well-known figure in Washington intelligence circles and brought him into intimate contact with the CIA's top strategists of 1949 and 1950. It is difficult to

455. Ibid., p. 93. Philby himself describes the Albanian operation in his KGB-sponsored memoirs, in which he maintains that the Anglo-American effort was incompetently directed and wracked throughout by petty CIA and SIS infighting. Of his own role in sabotaging the operation, he says nothing. Kim Philby, My Silent War (London: Macgibbon & Kee, 1968), pp. 117-119.

456. David C. Martin, Wilderness of Mirrors, p. 57.

457. Page, Leitch, and Knightley, The Philby Conspiracy, p. 197.

imagine how any Soviet agent could ever have been better placed, a fact not lost on Moscow. According to an FBI report, Philby tipped off Soviet intelligence that the Rosenbergs were going to be arrested, "yet they chose to sacrifice them, most probably to keep Philby's identity a secret."⁴⁵⁸

It was not until May 1951, when Philby's fellow Soviet agent (and Washington houseguest) Guy Burgess impulsively joined Donald MacLean in fleeing Britain, that anyone began to be suspicious of Philby. At the insistence of MI5, Philby was recalled to London, where he was accused of working for the Russians. Philby refused to crack, however, and many of his colleagues in SIS came to his defense. SIS Chief Stewart Menzies finally decided that Philby would have to be dismissed, though MI5 (to the extent that it had been given a fair chance) had been unable to prove its case.⁴⁵⁹ With Philby's forced retirement, it was finally obvious in Washington just how the Albanian operation had been betrayed. But although the logical conclusion to be drawn should have been

458. Quoted in Martin, Wilderness of Mirrors, p. 44. See also Lamphere and Shachtman, The FBI-KGB War, pp. 237-28. Lamphere, who was one of the FBI's top agents in the effort to uncover Soviet spies in the United States in the 1940's and 1950s, summarized the damage to the US which Philby had been instrumental in causing:

For years I had had the optimistic feeling that, based upon the breakthrough that the [deciphering of the 1944-45 KGB] messages provided, we would go on and on uncovering and rolling up KGB networks in the United States. Now I understood that the KGB had to have known of our decipherment of the messages, and that our advantage was gone.

459. Bethell, The Great Betrayal, p. 173. Also Pincher, Too Secret Too Long, p. 203.

that Stalin and Hoxha were by now perfectly familiar with the campaign, the decision was taken to continue. Perhaps it was felt that with Philby out of the way the agent drops would be more successful, and it was true that the Albanian Sigurimi were no longer waiting at the exact locations. Nevertheless, the Albanians still managed to catch up with the would-be insurgents pretty quickly. With all strategic surprise lost, it turned out that tactical surprise could not be recovered either. Of course, it should have been perfectly obvious to OPC that the Albanians were not going to be taken off guard: as if the disappearance of well-trained agents had not been proof enough of that fact, Moscow and Tirana took the step in January 1951 of publicly charging that the United States and Britain were infiltrating spies and saboteurs into Albania by land, sea, and air.⁴⁶⁰ In fact, the Albanian operation was marred by security lapses throughout its whole history - drunken agents causing public scenes in Malta, sloppy intrigue to win Greek military support, visibly unusual activities off the Italian coast.⁴⁶¹ There is every reason to believe that news of the Anglo-American operation

460. "Spying in Albania Laid to U.S." The New York Times, January 4, 1951, p. 6. One month later the Italian Communist Party announced that the United States was planning an invasion of Albania. See "Italian Reds See Blow at Albania," The New York Times, February 22, 1951, p. 6. Of course, most readers dismissed the charges as nonsense.

461. Bethell, The Great Betrayal, *passim*.

reached Tirana and Moscow by several routes in addition to Philby's, though none could match his detail.⁴⁶²

Yet one must still ask: what exactly did the planners of the Albanian operation hope to achieve? In the case of the efforts to support anti-regime activities in Lithuania, Poland, and the Ukraine, it is easy enough to see that American policy sought only to encourage and make use of movements which appeared to be serious problems for the Communists. The goal in those operations was to complicate the consolidation of communist control, or to gain the Joint Chiefs of Staff some measure of early warning of Soviet military intentions. Few US officials genuinely expected the Lithuanian Freedom Army or the remnants of Poland's wartime resistance to come to power. But in Albania, British and American strategists sought to create an insurgency from scratch. The only sensible reason for doing so (after all, operations of this nature were hardly inexpensive) must have been a certain pragmatic expectation that the campaign could succeed, that Enver Hoxha and his communist government could in fact be overthrown. I stress this point because it was quite clear from the OPC/SIS agents who managed to elude the Sigurimi and reach Greece that the Albanian population was prepared to rise up against Hoxha's regime, provided that the British and Americans

462. For his part, Philby cynically concluded that "It was just as well for the British and Americans" that the operation failed, because "in the event of success they would have had endless trouble with their new [Albanian] protégé." Philby My Secret War, p. 119. This strikes me as "mirror imaging" at its most ridiculous, a Soviet lament that their own inability to keep Hoxha in line reflects some underlying irresponsibility in the Albanian national character.

would give them the wherewithal to do it right. What the Albanians desired was that weapons be dropped to them on at least the scale that the British had done to support Hoxha during the war, whereas without adequate firepower at their disposal they were simply unwilling to risk their lives.

But neither the Truman nor the Eisenhower administration was prepared to intervene in such a way. There seemed to be no chance that the United States could effectively supply military aid to an anti-Communist insurgency without showing its hand, and at no point was Washington prepared to enact a policy in which America's role could not be "plausibly denied." Support for the Albanians therefore remained covert only: there were no substantial infusions of weapons to the insurgents, no demonstrative military maneuvers in the Adriatic to bring pressure to bear upon Hoxha, and no diplomatic steps in support of the pro-Western Albanian forces (such as the establishment of a government-in-exile). It is true that in Iran in 1953 and in Guatemala in 1954, CIA covert operations succeeded in helping to bring down anti-American regimes without overt American military involvement, but in neither of those cases were the regimes shored up by internal security systems as ruthless or efficient as those which the East European Communist Parties had been able to establish under the guidance of the NKVD. It would seem, then, that the decision to go ahead with the operation in Albania was a decision that had been poorly thought through, with no provision made for subsequent military or other support, should

the initial infiltrations of agents succeed in igniting an Albanian insurgency.

Meanwhile, there were small-scale indigenous uprisings from time to time in each of the other East European countries, suggesting that there were still possibilities for insurgencies there. But because these periodic anti-regime activities were not very extensive or well organized, they never received any serious attention by the CIA, particularly in the wake of the WIN debacle. In Hungary, for example, several resistance efforts were launched in the years following Rákosi's consolidation of power, but none ever got too far. In late 1950 a fledgling underground youth organization in Hungary calling itself the "Fifth Group of the Patriotic Association of Hungarian Boys and Girls" managed to circulate a series of leaflets calling upon Hungarians to fight the "high treason" of the Communist government, but its members were arrested and sent to prison.⁴⁶³ Another small resistance group, calling itself the "White Guard," was founded in Csepreg in Western Hungary in January 1950 and spent twelve months acquiring weapons and developing some form of cell structure, with the aim of occupying the villages near the Austrian border in the region of Szombathely. Their ultimate goal was the "overthrow by force of Hungary's communist government," but they were apparently trapped and defeated by AVH

463. Walter Dowling (American Deputy High Commissioner in Austria), "Attempt to Establish Underground Organization in Hungary," USVienna 493, November 30, 1950. Archives 764.00/11-3050.

forces in March 1951.⁴⁶⁴ In 1952, American authorities in Vienna reported the existence of a third Hungarian resistance movement, which if genuine and not a provocation, was seemingly the largest of the three. Its cell structure was rather extensive, and although not tremendously sophisticated, the system seemingly protected its members from arrest. The movement, which aimed at achieving "the liberation of Hungary from Communist yoke," was presumably liquidated by 1953.⁴⁶⁵ With the exception of the accounts of Hungarian refugees in Vienna, there does not seem to be any other record of these group's activities, and there is no indication whatsoever that any of these organizations ever made contact with officials of the US Legation in Budapest. However, one analyst of this period has claimed that the British Embassy in Budapest was in contact with a small underground organization at the time, one of whose members was reportedly arrested in 1950 for passing "detailed information that invading armies would need" to the British,⁴⁶⁶ but this claim has never been confirmed. Whatever the British were up to, it would seem that American intelligence operations in Hungary dried up considerably in the years after World War II. According to the CIA officer who was the Vienna Station Chief during the Hungarian Revolution, the CIA did not have any officers posted to American missions in Eastern Europe until at least 1953. CIA intelligence-gathering

464. Foreign Service Despatch, USVienna 1319, June 4, 1951.

465. "Alleged Hungarian Resistance Movement," Foreign Service Despatch, USVienna 957, November 28, 1952.

466. Irving, Uprising!, pp. 88-89.

operations in Hungary in this period, he claims, were run out of Austria, while operations in the Soviet Union were hampered by the objections of George Kennan, the US Ambassador in Moscow, to the stationing of any CIA officers in the American Embassy there.⁴⁶⁷

Despite the failure of the Albanian operation and the apparent difficulty of supporting any incipient insurgencies elsewhere in the Soviet bloc, the Eisenhower Administration never abandoned the idea of using covert operations to try to spark uprisings in Eastern Europe. NSC 5412/2, approved in December 1955, made it clear that attempting to undermine Eastern Europe's communist regimes was still seen to be in the American interest and that covert operations were to be employed toward that end:

The NSC has determined that ... covert operations shall to the greatest extent practicable, in light of U.S. and Soviet capabilities and taking into account the risk of general war, be designed to ... Create and exploit troublesome problems for International Communism, impair relations between the USSR and Communist China and between them and their satellites, complicate control within the USSR, Communist China and their satellites, and retard the growth of the military and economic potential of the Soviet bloc.⁴⁶⁸

It is difficult to see how covert operations by themselves could reasonably have been expected to achieve these several lofty goals, given that Eisenhower felt that the risk of war with the

467. De Silva, Sub Rosa, The CIA and the Uses of Intelligence, pp. 68, 71.

468. "National Security Council Directive on Covert Operations," NSC 5412/2, December 28, 1955. My italics. The directive went on to list explicitly the need to "develop underground resistance and facilitate covert and guerrilla operations" as one of the objectives of covert operations.

Soviet Union was great enough to restrict American activity to what could plausibly be disclaimed. As mentioned above, it was the failure of the Eisenhower administration to employ other elements of policy, particularly diplomatic pressure against Moscow and a buildup of American ground forces in Europe, which made American policy in Eastern Europe ineffective.

Nevertheless, early in 1956, following Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" to the Twentieth CPSU Congress, a major new covert American effort to promote insurgencies in Eastern Europe was established, called Operation Red Sox/Red Cap. Training centers were set up near Munich by CIA operatives Mike Ray and Charlie Katek, in which refugees from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania were trained in paramilitary techniques.⁴⁶⁹ The directors of the operation were confident that the refugees could be smuggled across the Iron Curtain, where they would be able to foment turmoil against the East European regimes. But they felt that several months of training in Munich would be necessary first, and insisted that in the meantime the United States not take any steps which might potentially create trouble in Eastern

469. William R. Corson, The Armies of Ignorance: The Rise of the American Intelligence Empire (New York: The Dial Press, 1977), p. 367. Thomas Powers disputes this account, citing the claims of unnamed intelligence sources that "the émigré armies ... were nothing more than name rosters of CIA-trained Eastern European leaders who had agreed to join resistance movements in the event of general war." Powers, The Man Who Kept the Secrets, p. 414. However, I believe that Operation Red Sox/Red Cap, complete with the training camps near Munich, did in fact exist. After his retirement in the 1970s, Angleton admitted as much. See below.

Europe, since no Red Sox/Red Cap agents would be in place to exploit the situation.

Accordingly, when Angleton managed to get the CIA a copy of Khrushchev's Secret Speech (seemingly through the Poles), both he and Wisner argued against releasing the damning text to the press, on the grounds that tensions would be sure to increase in Eastern Europe and the Red Sox/Red Cap forces were not yet "up to snuff."⁴⁷⁰ Ray Cline, on the other hand, one of the leading analysts in the Directorate of Intelligence, argued that the speech should be made public.⁴⁷¹ Cline noted that Angleton and Wisner "wanted to 'exploit' the speech rather than simply let everybody read it," a view Cline dismissed as "an example of the covert mind at work that ... seemed excessively narrow."⁴⁷² Cline's view prevailed, and on June 2 CIA Director Allen Dulles ordered Khrushchev's speech to be released. Meanwhile, the CIA's success in obtaining a copy of the speech - with the potential for turmoil behind the Iron Curtain that it represented - led the

470. Corson, The Armies of Ignorance, p. 368. For an account of Allen Dulles' insistence on obtaining a copy of the speech, see the comments of Robert Amory, the CIA's Deputy Director of Intelligence at the time, in Amory's interview with the author, Appendix A.

471. "I thought it was ... a rare opportunity to have all the critical things we had said for years about the Soviet dictatorship confirmed by the principal leader of the Soviet Politburo," Ray Cline, Secrets, Spies, and Scholars: Blueprint of the Essential CIA (Washington: Acropolis Books, 1976), p. 163.

472. Ibid., p. 164.

Operations directorate to accelerate its plans for Red Sox/Red Cap.⁴⁷³

Within a few weeks of the publication of the speech, the demonstrations in Poznan broke out, in which many Poles were killed. Tension increased in Hungary, and within another three weeks Rákosi was removed. Within the CIA, Angleton continued to maintain that Allen Dulles had made a major mistake in releasing the speech, since Red Sox/Red Cap forces were still not ready to enter Poland or Hungary,⁴⁷⁴ but the truth was that the pressures against Rákosi and Gerő had been building up for years, and although the American publication of the Secret Speech certainly expedited the pace of events in Hungary, the US could not be said in any way to have greatly influenced them. After all, word of Khrushchev's speech to some extent had filtered throughout Hungary already, though no definitive text had been seen outside Party circles. The charge that the CIA in some way "caused" the Hungarian Revolution - though Wisner and his subordinates surely would have liked to - today represents nothing more than a slur against the Revolutionaries in Hungary.⁴⁷⁵ The Hungarian freedom

473. This was revealed by Angleton following his retirement twenty years later. In a public interview, he said, "Having the document gave us enormous advantage to organize and update these operational groups ... with a view of never accepting the status quo of Soviet hegemony." See David Binder, "'56 East Europe Plan of C.I.A. is Described," The New York Times, November 30, 1976, p. 13.

474. See Martin, Wilderness of Mirrors, p. 90., and Binder, "'56 East Europe Plan of C.I.A. is Described," p. 13.

475. William Corson insists that Red Sox/Red Cap forces were inserted into Hungary at the time of the Revolution (The Armies of Ignorance, p. 369), a claim which I strongly

fighters, as will be seen, were left entirely to their own devices, and the Soviet leadership was given no reason not to crush them.

believe to be inaccurate. See the next chapter for a discussion of this issue.

CHAPTER FOUR:
THE UNITED STATES AND THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION

Prelude to Indifference

In the months after Khrushchev's condemnation of Stalin at the Twentieth Party Congress of the CPSU in February 1956, tension and popular discontent in Hungary grew steadily, a phenomenon which was only quickened by the riots in Poland in June and the removal of Rákosi in July. The details of the Hungarian leadership's inability to squelch the growing dissent within both the Communist Party and the population as a whole were duly reported by the US Legation to the State Department, where events in Hungary were being closely watched. Legation personnel also noted that Imre Nagy, who had been out of power since April 1955, had drawn to himself a group of several former prominent officials and was seemingly poised to return at some point to his former post as Premier. The US Embassy in Vienna likewise reported at length on the course of events in Hungary, while the American diplomatic missions in Warsaw, Prague, and Bucharest reported amply on the efforts undertaken by their Communist hosts to try to prevent the undercurrents of unrest in those countries from getting out of hand as well. Furthermore, all Foreign Service posts in Eastern Europe were instructed by

Washington to be particularly on the alert for any information related to Hungary, as were the various CIA stations around Europe. As early as the Spring of 1956, for example, the Vienna Station was instructed "to devote extra attention to the gathering of political intelligence on the Hungarian scene."⁴⁷⁶ By October, when popular discontent and agitation in Poland and Hungary had expanded to such a degree that there was about to be a leadership change in each country, Washington was quite well informed about the general contours of what was taking place.

Inexplicably, however, the Eisenhower Administration never established any plan for what American policy should be in the event that either the Polish or the Hungarian Communist regime were to fail to keep control. Although it was clear that Imre Nagy and his supporters had grown in strength to the point that they were in some ways almost a "shadow government," and although it was practically a foregone conclusion in Hungary at the time that if Nagy were to be named Premier that many of Gerő's policies would likely be overturned, the American Legation in Budapest was never instructed to attempt to make any type of contact with Nagy or his group. One might have thought that an Administration ostensibly trying to overturn the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe would have been highly interested in making contact with a disenchanting but nonetheless powerful faction of former Hungarian leaders, but the White House and the State Department apparently had other priorities. This timid and

476. De Silva, Sub Rosa, The CIA and the Uses of Intelligence, p. 118.

shortsighted posture was all the more remarkable because Gerő, like Rákosi before him, was leaving Nagy largely free to move about and to meet with nearly whomever he wanted.⁴⁷⁷

Of course, even without a directive explicitly instructing them to do so, the political officers at the US Legation could still have tried to make contact with Imre Nagy or any of his top assistants, if only to try to determine what sorts of changes Nagy hoped to put into place should he succeed in coming to power. Perhaps once such contacts had been established American officials might have been able to help influence certain of Nagy's decisions, but even leaving that possibility aside, meetings with Nagy or his advisors at a minimum would have given both the Legation staff and their superiors in Washington a better understanding of the Hungarian opposition. Tom Rogers, the head of the Legation's Political Section, was at something of a loss to explain why the Legation had not been more active:

As 1956 unfolded, we were very interested in finding out what the thinking was in Nagy's group, but there was no concerted effort to make contact: I don't believe that any of us, including [Minister Christian] Ravndal, ever tried to talk with Nagy. The logical question, of course, is "Why not? What's a Legation for?" and in looking back, I must say that it's not easy to give a convincing answer. I guess that although we were very busy trying to get information, we just assumed that any overtures on our part would not be welcomed by Nagy or his people.⁴⁷⁸

477. According to Béla Király, who joined Imre Nagy's group upon his release from prison, the activities of Nagy and his followers "were completely out in the open, [although] under the eyes of the Party and police." For Király's interview with the author, see Appendix I.

478. See Rogers' interview with the author, Appendix O.

Rogers added, however, that he and the Press Attaché, Anton Nyerges, did attend a few of the meetings of the Petöfi Circle, the (initially Party-sponsored) forum in which Hungary's most prominent intellectuals and writers proclaimed their demands for reforms and their support for Imre Nagy. The Petöfi Circle was also the focus of attention on the part of the CIA, which had "stepped up" its "intelligence [gathering] operations in and out of Hungary and particularly into Budapest," according to Peer De Silva, the Station Chief in Vienna. As an example, De Silva notes that an American agent was present at the Circle's important meeting of June 27, when participants demanded the resignation of Rákosi and an official rehabilitation of László Rajk.⁴⁷⁹

Although Rogers maintained that the reason why the Legation did not make more of an effort to meet with Imre Nagy or any of his top advisors was because it was feared that such an approach would be rebuffed, his deputy, Gáza Katona, may have come closer to identifying the heart of the problem when he noted that even though Nagy was recognized as a prominent opponent to Rákosi and Gerö, he "was still very much regarded as a Communist."⁴⁸⁰ It

479. De Silva, Sub Rosa, The CIA and the Uses of Intelligence, p. 119. According to Rogers, though, none of the CIA reports on the Petöfi meetings were made known to the Legation staff. Rogers, letter to the author.

480. For Katona's interview, see Appendix H. And Rogers pointed out that when the Legation suggested in early Autumn 1956 that one of Nagy's closest colleagues, Miklós Gimes, be encouraged to come visit the United States to observe the Presidential Election, it was discovered that Gimes could not obtain a visa because he was a Communist. See Appendix O.

would seem that for many American officials, the rivalry between Nagy's group and the Gerő regime was a split which could have little relevance to the United States. Even though the US had been sending Communist Yugoslavia economic and military aid since 1951, if not earlier, American directives regarding the other East European states continued to make few distinctions among the various factions which were competing for power. The example Tito had set, by which a Communist regime could defy Moscow - and in so doing help to further the American goal of weakening the Soviet hold over Eastern Europe - was seemingly ignored by the US officials involved in Hungarian affairs. Imre Nagy was very different in his political views and factional allegiances from Tito, of course, but the challenge to the prevailing status quo in Hungary which Nagy represented should in itself have been enough to merit closer American attention.⁴⁸¹ By late October,

481. This problem was not uniquely American. The British, for example, who in World War II had been much more interested than the Americans in Hungary's fate, now seemed as unimpressed with Nagy's group as Eisenhower's Administration appeared to be. George Heltai, who was Nagy's foreign policy advisor, met with personnel of the British mission on several occasions, at his own initiative, in the course of negotiating to buy one of the British diplomats' cars. According to Heltai:

This began in September 1956, when it was already well known that I was a close friend of Imre Nagy. But despite that, and despite the fact that I was in the British embassy several times, I was never asked anything about Nagy, about the plans of his followers, or about the strength of our group. Even after the reburial of Rajk, when the power of our movement had to have been obvious, the British still showed no interest in asking my views of what was going on.

when the Hungarian Revolution broke out, the Eisenhower Administration's failure to learn more about Nagy and his followers and to distinguish among the various Hungarian Communist factions had severely handicapped American policy in Hungary. This was a handicap which the Administration was never able to overcome, as Eisenhower's policy makers were extremely slow to recognize the potential American opportunities afforded by the Revolution.

The Eisenhower Administration's response to the crisis which erupted in Poland in mid-October betrayed the extent to which the United States seemed to have lost interest in East European affairs, and may well have helped convince the Soviet leadership two weeks later that they could intervene on a massive scale in Hungary without fear of any serious American objection. On October 19, at the Polish Party's Eighth Plenum, Wladislaw Gomulka and several of his supporters were named to the Politburo, making virtually certain Gomulka's assumption of the post of First Secretary. Almost immediately Khrushchev appeared in Warsaw, together with Molotov, Mikoyan, and Kaganovich, and threatened to crush Poland if Gomulka's promotion were not reversed (Soviet troops had left their bases near Wroclaw and

See Appendix F. Christopher Cope, an officer in the Political Section of the British Legation, disagrees with this account and maintains that the British were in discreet contact with several members of Nagy's entourage. Rogers, letter to the author. Cope's claim is supported by the US Legation's admission at one point prior to the Revolution that several of its insights had "come from two contacts of the British Legation." USBudapest Despatch 105, September 21, 1956. Archives 764.00/9-2156.

were moving toward Warsaw).⁴⁸² The Polish leadership stood behind Gomulka, however, and the Soviet delegation - itself deeply divided, though putting on a facade of unity - was compelled to back down. Given the circumstances, Khrushchev's decision not to attempt to use force in Poland seems almost surely to have stemmed more from his awareness of the Poles' readiness and ability to fight than from Soviet concerns over the international implications or possible American responses to a Soviet military intervention in Polish affairs. But during the course of the next two weeks, as the Soviet leadership debated how to deal with the Hungarian Revolution, the US position on Eastern Europe would come under much closer scrutiny. Decision makers in Moscow were no doubt particularly interested in Secretary Dulles' public reply to a question on October 21 asking what the government's view was regarding the movement of Soviet troops in Poland. Dulles answered that although the Warsaw Pact "was pretty much imposed by the Kremlin upon these countries" and designed primarily "to keep them under servitude," the movement of troops was nevertheless something which "Technically they, perhaps, have the legal right to do ... under the Warsaw Pact."⁴⁸³ When asked how the United States would react if those

482. Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc, p. 256.

483. "Interview with John Foster Dulles, 'Face the Nation,' October 21, 1956," in The Eisenhower Administration, 1953-1961: A Documentary History, eds. Robert L. Branyan and Lawrence H. Larsen (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 667.

troops were to be used to try to overthrow Gomulka, Dulles replied lamely:

It is not a matter which perhaps could be challenged as a violation of international law because they have a treaty which purports, at least, to give them that right. It would certainly be a serious affair if it happened, and it would certainly be one which we would watch very closely.⁴⁸⁴

This statement must have been highly reassuring to observers in Moscow, but if, for whatever reason, any of them were still worried about American intentions, or willing to speculate whether by "watch very closely" the unpredictable US Secretary of State perhaps meant "consider getting involved in," Foster Dulles now removed all doubt. Asked if the Eisenhower Administration was planning to sit the Polish crisis out as it had done during the East German uprising of June 1953, Dulles answered categorically:

I do not think that we would send our Armed Forces into Poland, or into East Germany under those circumstances. I doubt if that would be a profitable or desirable thing to do. That would be the last thing in the world that these people, who are trying to win their independence, would want.⁴⁸⁵

Then, in the most unnecessary comment of this whole sorry interview, Dulles explained why the Administration would take no steps in support of Gomulka by comparing the American hope that

484. Ibid., pp. 667-668.

485. Ibid., p. 668. Also The New York Times, October 22, 1956, p. 1. Dulles felt that the reason why Poles would not want such an American intervention was because it would lead to a potentially devastating war on Polish territory, but he should have stopped to think that the Poles certainly did not want the Soviet leadership assured of US non-involvement either.

Poland might regain a measure of freedom to Stalin's postponement of the liberation of Warsaw in 1944 until the Nazis had liquidated the Polish underground:

You know, to deliberately start up military activity is often a great mistake. You may recall that Russia did that deliberately to the Poles in Warsaw during the Second World War. They stirred them up to military activity, they were suppressed and killed off by the Germans, which was probably the result that the Russians wanted. ...

I wouldn't certainly want to give the impression that the United States is indifferent to what is going on, or that the United States has not in proper ways made its contribution to what is going on by keeping alive the love of liberty. ... But what specifically you do in these situations has to be judged very carefully because it's very easy to make a misstep which undoes the result which you want.⁴⁸⁶

The President, for his part, did express support on October 20 for the Polish "traditional yearning for liberty and independence," and State Department officials did their best to convey to Moscow that "Soviet action in Poland would be disastrous for Soviet-American relations," but these platitudes meant little when juxtaposed with John Foster Dulles' unequivocal remarks.⁴⁸⁷ The Soviet leadership could not have failed to recognize that Dulles' gratuitous comments represented the true policy of the Eisenhower Administration, and in this they were completely correct.

486. "Interview with John Foster Dulles, 'Face the Nation,' October 21, 1956," p. 669.

487. For the perspective of the Polish Desk officer in the State Department at the time, see the author's interview with George Lister, Appendix K. See also Wandycz, The United States and Poland, p. 357.

The outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution on October 23, when Hungarian and then Soviet forces fired on Hungarian students and workers, caught the United States by surprise. Despite the change in leadership in Poland the previous week and Gomulka's success in staring Khrushchev down, the State Department did not anticipate that the Hungarians would react to the Poles' success by going so far in defiance of the Gerö regime. In addition, a great deal of the government's energy was centered on Egypt, where Britain and France were engaged in the growing crisis with Nasser over control of the Suez Canal. Moreover, even among the Administration's officials charged with monitoring East European affairs, the area of prime concern was not Hungary; as Ambassador Bohlen admitted, "our attention was focused on Warsaw."⁴⁸⁸ The President himself admitted five years later that the Revolution "started in such a way that everybody was a little bit fooled."⁴⁸⁹ Still, the Eisenhower Administration should not have been completely surprised by the turn of events in Hungary, if only because the government had spent the better part of three years claiming - even in its own top secret internal policy guidelines - to be trying to promote anti-Soviet activity within the East European states. As late as September 1956, John Foster Dulles reported gleefully to the President that "we have ...

488. Bohlen, Witness to History, p. 409. Bohlen had reported to Washington on October 3 that in his view the disarray in Hungary would probably not prompt a Stalinist crackdown. Ibid., p. 407.

489. Television interview with CBS, November 23, 1961. Cited in Barber, Seven Days of Freedom, p. 210.

contributed toward creating strains and stresses within the captive world, such as were manifested by the East German outbreaks of 1953 and the Poznan outbreaks this year."⁴⁹⁰ Of course, Eisenhower had been provided ample warning as early as 1954 that a major uprising in Hungary was possible (such as the predictions of Pfeiffer and Tito cited above), and Foster Dulles had remarked on a number of occasions that the Soviet grip on Eastern Europe had been placed into jeopardy in the wake of the Austrian Treaty. In fact, according to the Director of the West German intelligence organization, who worked in close collaboration with the CIA, Bonn already "had secretly predicted in intelligence appreciations" that there would be an insurrection in Hungary.⁴⁹¹

To be fair to the Administration, however, the truth is that the suddenness of the Hungarian Revolution took even the Hungarians by surprise. Right up until October 22, Ernő Gerő himself was satisfied enough of the situation on the ground in Budapest that he spent a leisurely week in Yugoslavia, and most of his subordinates in the government were equally complacent.

490. Letter, Dulles to Eisenhower, September 5, 1956. DDELib, AWF; Dulles-Herter Series; Box 6.

491. Reinhard Gehlen, The Service: The Memoirs of General Reinhard Gehlen, trans. David Irving (New York: World Publishing, 1972), p. 227. In my view, Gehlen's claim probably exaggerated the prescience of his organization, although there is little doubt that he must have been one of the CIA's most productive sources of information on what was happening in Hungary. According to one of the CIA's officers in Vienna, though, the importance of the Gehlen Organization has been vastly overrated. See John Mapother's interview with the author, Appendix L.

Supporters of Imre Nagy were no less taken aback by the swift turn of events beginning with the huge procession to General Bem's statue. Endre Márton's wife, for example, who worked for UPI, was in London the day just before the Revolution broke out; when asked on that day whether she thought that there would be an uprising in Hungary she jokingly answered that she didn't think so, "unless perhaps the Hungarian soccer team were to lose another World Cup final" (Hungary had lost in the finals in 1954 to West Germany).⁴⁹² For their part, Imre Nagy and his circle of close associates were not only surprised, but completely unprepared for a full-scale Revolution. According to Béla Király, Nagy had hoped to be able to secure reforms gradually, over a much more drawn out period of time:

Imre Nagy's group wanted the Revolution the least of anyone, because it ruined everything. They were reformers, not revolutionaries: they did not create the Revolution, they did not push for it, they did not want it. It saddened them. Imre Nagy did not know what to do with it. It was completely against his character, plans, and purpose.⁴⁹³

Clearly, therefore, if even Imre Nagy was taken by surprise by the outbreak of the Revolution on October 23, then the United States could not have been expected to have been any more prepared. But this does not take into account the fact that

492. See the author's interview with Endre Márton, Appendix M. Márton added, as was mentioned in Chapter 1, that even the AVH saw no need to take any precautions against a popular insurrection, choosing not to issue its officers false identification cards that might have hidden their AVH affiliation.

493. The full text of Király's interview with the author is given in Appendix I.

there was a major difference between Nagy and his advisors and Eisenhower and his: where the Nagy group apparently had never thought in terms of a country-wide insurrection against Gerö and his clique, the Eisenhower Administration - to judge from its own policy guidelines - had spent over three years trying to pave the way for precisely such challenges to the East European Communist regimes. Now, after hundreds of speeches by Eisenhower's supporters beginning in 1952 promising "liberation of the satellites," after years of radio and balloon propaganda laying out in full detail the corruption and incompetence of Rákosi's regime, and after the Soviet withdrawal from Austria which Eisenhower and Foster Dulles had insisted take place, Hungarians took their cue and took to the streets to demand a more decent society. What would Eisenhower do?

In the first few days of the Revolution, until about October 26 or 27, the Administration - like most of the rest of the world - had a certain amount of difficulty in ascertaining the details of exactly what had happened in Hungary. The cables of the US Legation in Budapest from October 23 and 24 reported amply on the struggle in the streets (though by necessity the political conclusions were rather tentative), but then cable communications between Washington and Budapest were suddenly completely cut off.⁴⁹⁴ Reports from other American missions reflected the fact that they too were having trouble determining just what was

494. The State Department announced on October 26 that it had lost contact with the Legation in Budapest. The New York Times, October 27, 1956, p. 1.

taking place in Budapest. Ambassador U. Alexis Johnson reported from Prague that all communications between Czechoslovakia and Hungary had been severed,⁴⁹⁵ while Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson reported from Vienna that telephone links with Budapest had been cut on October 23 and that even the Hungarian Legation in Vienna was (allegedly) unable to get through.⁴⁹⁶ The resourceful American Legation in Budapest was able to keep a teletype line open to Washington for most of October 25, but was unable to transmit classified information. The messages received in the State Department from Hungary that day therefore still concentrated more on the fighting in the city than on political developments.⁴⁹⁷ Nevertheless, the Legation was able to report that the insurrection was both anti-Soviet and anti-Communist, and that the Hungarians in the streets were calling for American help:

In response to [the] crowds which continued to grow before the Legation, demanding assistance, and as what apparently was the only way to prevent this crowd from growing into unmanageable proportions we have just made the following statement and asked them to move away peacefully. They appeared satisfied.

"We understand the situation and it has been reported to our government as fully as we are able. You will understand that we ourselves can take no decision; this is a matter for our government and the United Nations.

495. USPrague 200, October 25, 1956. Archives 764.00/10-2556.

496. USVienna 869, October 24, 1956. Archives 764.00/10-2456.

497. "Am typing on floor," one report from Budapest began, "A big battle ... just took place in front of Legation; seems to have gone towards Parliament. ... Heavy gunfire from Parliament area. ... reports ... of some Soviet tanks going over to the crowd flying Hungarian flags." USBudapest unnumbered, October 25, 1956. Archives 764.00/10-2556.

We have been in Hungary for many years and think we understand the situation."

... Mass demonstrations carrying Hungarian flags and black flags running over 2,000 have sung [the] Hungarian anthem and appealed for help in front of [the] American Legation. American officers in [an] effort to disperse [the] crowd have repeated essentially [the] message [of] earlier ... Some of [the] crowd has dispersed but others are attempting to enter [the] Legation.⁴⁹⁸

Following the reception of this cable, the State Department did not hear again directly from the Budapest Legation until October 29. There were many other sources of information, however, and it is my view that by October 27 the White House had a generally accurate picture of the situation on the ground in Hungary. By October 29, there is no question that the President had detailed and fully up-to-date information available to him.⁴⁹⁹ Radio Free Europe, for example, operating out of Munich, was able to monitor and record the broadcasts coming from Hungary, where insurgents had captured radio transmitters

498. Ibid. The information in this cable was reported to the National Security Council by Allen Dulles on October 26. See Eisenhower, The White House Years: Waging Peace, 1956 - 1961 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), p. 67.

Not everyone in the Legation agreed that the Legation should even make a statement to the crowds, let alone suggest American support for the demonstrations. According to Gáza Katona, the Legation's Chargé d'Affaires ordered everyone in the building "to keep a low profile, to close the blinds and pretend to ignore what was going on outside." But Katona decided to act otherwise, and without permission waved a red, white, and green banner out the third floor balcony window. Appendix H.

499. That was the date on which Tom Rogers and the Legation's assistant military attaché, Tom Gleason, arrived in Vienna, from where they sent out the Legation's most sensitive cables. Another such trip was made the next week. See Rogers' interview with the author, Appendix O.

throughout the provinces, and the most significant information from these Hungarian transmissions was sent on to analysts in Washington at once.⁵⁰⁰ Secondly, the CIA, working out of Vienna, was able to infiltrate Hungarian-speaking agents into Hungary, where observations were made of the Hungarian police and army and of Soviet military units. It did not take long to confirm that the vast majority of the Hungarian forces had gone over to the side of the insurgents. As far as the Red Army detachments were concerned, a report made by an American agent of a Soviet unit stationed near Győr was fairly typical: the Soviet troops were clearly not deployed for combat, and one of the Russian soldiers even specifically told the Hungarians of the area, "This isn't our affair - our orders are to stay out of everything."⁵⁰¹ From Budapest, meanwhile, when the cable transmitting facility of the British Legation was also cut, the British made direct radio contact with London on their own transmitter, which the Minister, Sir Leslie Fry, had had the foresight to install.⁵⁰² In this

500. See Paul Henze's interview with the author, Appendix G. Henze stressed that this service, rather than the RFE broadcasts into Hungary for which Radio Free Europe was later criticized, was RFE's most important contribution to the American role in the Revolution.

501. De Silva, Sub Rosa, The CIA and the Uses of Intelligence, p. 121. Overly cautious, Ambassador Thompson had forbidden any of the Embassy's staff from even approaching the Hungarian border. "Fortunately," De Silva wrote, "he did not extend the ban to agent activities and within hours we had a number of Hungarian-speaking sources moving into Hungary."

502. After October 31 the US Legation also had its own radio transmitting equipment, which Tom Rogers' group had managed to bring back from Vienna. The Legation was able to use the radio for about a week, until the Hungarians caught on and prohibited further transmissions. See Appendix O.

way, Whitehall and Washington were kept informed of the general developments in Hungary during these few days.⁵⁰³ At the same time, various American diplomatic posts, while still cut off from Budapest, were nonetheless able to report highly relevant information: the United States mission in Bucharest, for instance, cabled Washington on October 26 that several reliable sources indicated that "Soviet troops from [the] Timosoara region [in Northwestern Romania] were called into Hungary in very early hours Wednesday [October 24]."⁵⁰⁴ Of equal significance was the fact that by late in the day on October 26, the State Department was able to inform all posts that Imre Nagy had already "promised inter alia to open negotiations for withdrawal [of] Soviet troops from Hungary when insurgents lay down arms."⁵⁰⁵ By October 27, then, even without timely reports from the Legation in Budapest, the Eisenhower Administration knew that Imre Nagy once again had come to power in Hungary and was calling for some type of Soviet military withdrawal, that János Kádár had replaced Ernő Gerő and was apparently cooperating with Nagy, that Soviet military units in Hungary had fought ineffectively or not at all, and that the

503. Lieutenant-Colonel Noel Crowley, "Hungary, 1956," in As Luck Would Have It: A Memoir, ed. Sir Leslie Fry (London: Phillimore & Company, 1978), pp. 95-96. High-level British and American intelligence officials met daily in London as the Anglo-American Joint Intelligence Committee in order to share exactly this type of information. See Appendix A for the author's interview with Robert Amory, the CIA's Deputy Director of Intelligence in this period.

504. USBucharest 212, October 26, 1956. Archives 764.00/10-2656.

505. State Circular 315, October 26, 1956. Archives 764.00/10-2656.

Soviet Union had brought in reinforcements from Romania but seemed to be interested in a compromise with the Nagy regime. An American policy toward the nascent revolution now needed to be articulated.

Signaling America's Hands-Off Policy

Whatever its initial shock over the events in Hungary, the Eisenhower Administration could not have been disappointed with what had taken place. It seemed that three years of American prophesying about the eventual collapse of Soviet domination of Eastern Europe had suddenly begun to come true, though, as the President well knew, the US in fact had done precious little of any consequence to expedite the process. But be that as it may, the question which now had to be addressed was whether or not the Administration would take any tangible steps to try to help the Hungarians succeed in liberating themselves. From Washington's perspective of about October 26 or 27, when it had become evident that Imre Nagy's fledgling regime had survived its first challenge, it seemed that Nagy had two courses of action available to him, either of which would indirectly promote American interests in Eastern Europe. On the one hand, Nagy might insist on retaining the Communist monopoly over state power but in some way nevertheless try to distance Hungary from the Soviet Union (something akin to what Tito had done), or he might attempt to dismantle certain aspects of the Communist apparatus in Hungary but at the same time work to mollify Moscow. Whichever course Nagy took, one would have thought that some

significant level of American support (whether overt or discreet is another matter) would have been seen by the Administration to have been expedient.

From the start, however, the Administration took a defensive and defeatist attitude toward the Hungarian Revolution. Late in the afternoon on October 25, John Foster Dulles reported to Eisenhower that the State Department was considering circulating a letter to the members of the United Nations Security Council requesting that the events in Hungary be placed upon the Council's agenda. Dulles was of the view that the US should not wait for prior British and French support for the motion, since they would not be prepared to act quickly, and he wanted to bring the matter up immediately. But the President overruled him, claiming that if the US acted alone it would seem as if the Administration was motivated by purely internal political purposes. If it meant waiting until Monday (October 29) to raise the Hungarian question before the Security Council, Eisenhower said, that "would not be fatal."⁵⁰⁶ At the next day's National

506. "Telephone Call to the President in New York," October 25, 1956, 5:02 PM. DDELib, John Foster Dulles Papers (Henceforth JFD Papers); Phone Call Series; Box 11. With the Presidential election only two weeks away, Eisenhower was doubtless pondering the fact that he had done little to implement his 1952 Campaign pledges to liberate Eastern Europe. Yet even though an unambiguous American demand for Soviet restraint in Hungary would have been not only effective politically but also quite advantageous to the national interest, Eisenhower thought only in terms of the domestic side of the picture. A leader who was more of a strategist and less of a tactician might have recognized that the Hungarian Revolution afforded the United States the opportunity to pressure its overextended and divided adversary.

Security Council meeting, the question of how the United States should deal with the uprising was formally discussed for the first time. In that meeting, the President was presented with the views of his subordinates but was not able to decide what American policy toward the Revolution should be. Unwilling to take the initiative and order some form of effective American backing - even if for the moment only diplomatic - for the Hungarians, Eisenhower instead instructed the NSC's Planning Board to "prepare a comprehensive analysis of the developments in Hungary and Poland, and possible courses of action in the light thereof which the United States should consider."⁵⁰⁷ However, the problem with requesting the bureaucracy's analysis at this important juncture (in addition to "passing the buck"), was that the Planning Board had never been designed to play a role in a fast-breaking crisis. Although the Board eventually submitted a very competent study, NSC 5616/2, "Interim U.S. Policy on Developments in Poland and Hungary," it was not approved until November 19.⁵⁰⁸ The different government departments represented on the Planning Board spent the two weeks after October 26

507. Memorandum of Discussion of the 301st Meeting of the NSC, October 26, 1956, p. 7. DDELib, AWF; NSC Series; Box 8. Unfortunately most of this document is still classified.

508. The Planning Board presented the first draft of its recommendations to the full NSC on November 1, but the Council members did not agree on the paper, and the President ordered that a new draft be written (though when finally accepted the relevant paragraphs were very similar). Still, Bob Amory, who was one of the main participant on the Planning Board, stressed that the Board had not been expected to report back quickly with its policy options toward Hungary. See Appendix A.

debating what American policy toward Hungary should or should not be, but this meant that in the meantime no steps were being taken which might conceivably have prevented the Soviet leadership from deciding in favor of intervention in Hungary.⁵⁰⁹

Apparently a good deal of the discussion around the NSC table on October 26 concerned how to convince the Russians that they had nothing to fear from the United States in Hungary. The Council members seem to have felt that the Soviet leadership needed to be reassured that the US was not trying to incorporate Hungary or any of its neighbors into NATO, and Eisenhower himself wondered what the most effective means would be for the Administration to emphasize that "we have no interest in those areas."⁵¹⁰ The idea of reassuring Moscow regarding American intentions in Hungary may have been first suggested by Harold Stassen, officially the President's Special Assistant on Disarmament. Shortly after the NSC meeting, Stassen wrote the President the following note:

Perhaps I did not make my view clear on the matter of promptly getting across to Zhukov and the more conservative Soviet leaders some assurance on United States policy in the Hungarian-Polish situation.

The Soviet Union may calculate that if they lose control of Hungary, that country would be taken into NATO by the United States, and this would be a great threat in Soviet eyes to their own security. May it not be wise for the United States in some manner to make it clear that we are willing to have Hungary be

509. For an analysis of the Soviet decision to intervene, see Chapter 5.

510. Telephone conversation between Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles, October 26, 1956, 5:51 PM. DDELib, AWF; DDE Diary Series; Box 18. In this conversation, the President discussed the morning's NSC meeting.

established on the Austrian basis - independent - and not affiliated with NATO?⁵¹¹

The President approved Stassen's idea despite the fact that absolutely no responsible American official had ever contemplated - let alone called for - Hungarian participation in NATO, nor was there any plausible reason to expect that anyone in the Kremlin seriously believed such a development to be an American policy goal. The leading thinkers of the Eisenhower Administration might have paused to note that the Soviet leadership had seen no need to deploy their forces in Czechoslovakia, which bordered supposedly aggressive "revanchist" West Germany, or in Bulgaria, which also bordered NATO territory. Hungary, by contrast, bordered only neutral or Communist states. In fact, just one year earlier Khrushchev had actually withdrawn Soviet forces from the key piece of territory at Hungary's Western doorstep, something he seemingly never would have done had he or any of his partners in the leadership genuinely feared that Eisenhower would try to pull Hungary into NATO. For its part, the Administration had shown by its handling of the Austrian Treaty not only that it had no desire to make Central Europe into an American military domain but that it was ready to pull out of those areas it already held if circumstances would permit. Eisenhower's advisors also failed to take into consideration the certain

511. Stassen to Eisenhower, October 26, 1956. DDELib, AWF; Dulles-Herter Series; Box 6. The President indicated his approval of this logic by scrawling on Stassen's note that he had instructed Foster Dulles to include a statement along the lines of what Stassen suggested in Dulles' foreign policy address planned for the next day in Dallas.

recognition in Moscow that the United States had never shown any interest in trying to entice Yugoslavia into NATO, even while Belgrade was receiving American military aid. And Imre Nagy, like Tito, was still very much a Communist (and based on this fact alone the Administration continually belittled or ignored the Hungarian regime), who had never viewed NATO in anything but the most negative light. There was no reason whatsoever to believe, either in Moscow or Washington, that Nagy would now try to bring Hungary into NATO. Finally, it is difficult to see how the President could possibly have believed that his Administration's policy in Europe would strike the Soviet leadership as threatening, when there were simply no American forces available on the Continent to oversee a hypothetical Hungarian effort to join NATO. Indeed, Eisenhower himself had told the NSC on October 26, "I doubt that the Russian leaders genuinely fear an invasion by the West," and if this was true, why was a need perceived to reassure Moscow about anything?⁵¹²

By October 26, following news of the Soviet troop movements from Romania and the first (of many) intelligence warnings of a Soviet military buildup just east of Hungary in Soviet Ruthenia, the President and his advisors reached the questionable

512. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Waging Peace, p. 67. The President added, however, and this is a vitally important insight into the Administration's thinking at the time, that the Soviet leadership "might ... be tempted to resort to extreme measures, even to start a world war" if its hold over the satellites were threatened. Eisenhower evidently had little understanding of Stalin's view of Eastern Europe chiefly as a glacis, and was overlooking the willingness of Stalin's successors to consider pullbacks from Eastern Europe where events made it necessary.

conclusion that the men in the Kremlin had already made up their minds to crush the Revolution. It was therefore felt that only American guarantees of non-interference, if anything, might forestall a Soviet invasion.⁵¹³ Undersecretary of State Robert Murphy, one of the State Department's "resident experts" on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, was almost surely reflecting a generally held view within the Administration when he wrote that while in the first place he had never expected a revolution to occur in Hungary, "I never doubted that if a revolt did break out, the U.S.S.R. would use every means no matter how brutal to suppress it."⁵¹⁴ This statement is ironic not only because it attributes a greater degree of confidence and certainty (let alone unity) to the Soviet leadership than they themselves felt at that time, but because Murphy persisted in his belief in unwavering Soviet resolve even while later admitting that the eventual Soviet decision to intervene was "taken with the greatest reluctance."⁵¹⁵ Murphy was not alone in his view. According to Andrew Goodpaster, Eisenhower's Staff Secretary at the time, a great many officials in the Administration were

513. The truth was that the Soviet troop movements of October 24-25 came in response to the machinations of Gerő and Andropov in Budapest and not as the result of any decision in Moscow to crush all dissent in Hungary. The buildup of Soviet forces in Uzhgorod (in the old Carpatho-Ukraine) between October 27 and October 31 was in all likelihood taken as a military precaution, perhaps even with explicit Politburo sanction, in order to prepare for whatever orders Khrushchev and his partners in the Kremlin might later decide to give.

514. Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors, p. 477.

515. Ibid, p. 479.

convinced that the Hungarian Revolution was a "lost endeavor," that there was "no prospect of doing something to save the Hungarians," and that the decision had already been made in Moscow to invade but that "the Russians ... were just holding back to a time of their own choosing."⁵¹⁶ Similarly, Jacob Beam, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Soviet and East European Affairs, told the author that the Administration's primary concern was not to devise a way for the United States to try to help make the Hungarian Revolution successful, but "to avoid any act which would provoke the Russians to destroy the Austrian State Treaty."⁵¹⁷ Here in a nutshell, then, was the suffocatingly defensive logic of the Eisenhower Administration. Not only was forceful Soviet suppression of the Revolution considered a foregone conclusion, but it was believed that any American efforts on the Hungarians' behalf would somehow inevitably trigger a Soviet invasion of Austria. American policy toward the Hungarian Revolution unfortunately was based on questionable and illogical assumptions such as these.

516. For the full text of General Goodpaster's remarks, see his interview with the Oral History Project of the International Security Studies Program, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy; Washington, DC, June 1986.

517. See Appendix B. Horace Torbert, at the time the State Department officer in charge of Austrian and Italian Affairs (and later the Chargé d'Affaires in Hungary), agreed that "in the uncertainty of the time" the Administration was "concerned that the newly won independence of Austria might be threatened." For Torbert's interview with the author, see Appendix Q. John Mapother, a CIA officer in Vienna at the time, feels that Foster Dulles was convinced that Soviet troops would retake Austria in the event of a crisis in Eastern Europe. See Appendix L.

In the days following the October 26 NSC meeting, President Eisenhower continued to place a great deal of emphasis on reassuring the Soviet leadership of American non-involvement in Eastern Europe. With Eisenhower's approval, Secretary Dulles included in his Dallas foreign policy address of October 27 the following paragraph:

And let me make this clear, beyond a possibility of doubt: the United States has no ulterior purpose in desiring the independence of the satellites countries. Our unadulterated wish is that these peoples, from whom so much of our own national life derives, should have sovereignty restored to them, and that they should have governments of their own free choosing. We do not look upon these nations as potential military allies. We see them as friends and as part of a new and friendly and no longer divided Europe...⁵¹⁸

Eisenhower and Dulles were not certain, however, that the assurance to Moscow made in this paragraph would be enough to convince Khrushchev, his colleagues in the Politburo, and the Soviet military command (whom Eisenhower seemed to believe had a wide amount of autonomy in this case) that their alleged fears of American aggressive intentions in Hungary were unfounded. The next day, therefore, Henry Cabot Lodge, the US Ambassador to the United Nations, was instructed to draw the Security Council's attention to Dulles' speech. Lodge was careful specifically to quote the sentence, "We do not look upon these nations as

518. Department of State Press Release, "Address by the Honorable John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, Before the Dallas Council on World Affairs," October 27, 1956. Dulles' reference to "a new and friendly and no longer divided Europe" sounds very much like his report to the National Security Council in 1955 that the Iron Curtain dividing Europe would be "fuzzed up." As in that report, Dulles did not explain just how this would take place. Would Soviet troops withdraw or not?

potential military allies," and he added as an elaboration his hope that the Soviet Union would not misunderstand American policy toward Hungary.⁵¹⁹ Then, on the remote chance that the Soviet leadership still had somehow managed to miss the point, Ambassador Bohlen was instructed to bring the key sentence in the Dallas speech personally to Khrushchev's or Zhukov's attention. The idea for this third declaration of commitment to a "hands-off" policy seems to have originated with Secretary Dulles, who phoned the President on the morning of October 29 for approval to direct "Bohlen to inform the Soviet Government of the passage in my Dallas speech upon which we had worked together, indicating that we did not look upon these satellite countries as potential military allies."⁵²⁰ Bohlen was directed to stress to the Soviet leadership that the key paragraph in the Dallas speech had "resulted from intensive consideration" at the "highest level" of the US government, and that the Soviet leadership (whom Dulles must have considered rather slow) should therefore "appreciate [that] it is a high level policy statement."⁵²¹ In Moscow, Bohlen succeeded in delivering the message to Zhukov and Molotov

519. Radványi, Hungary and the Superpowers, p. 12.

520. Department of State Memorandum, "Memorandum of Telephone Conversation with the President," October 29, 1956, 8 AM. DDELib, JFD Papers; Phone Call Series; Box 11. Eisenhower responded that "this was a good idea."

521. State 510, "Personal for Ambassador from Secretary," October 29, 1956. DDELib, AWF; Dulles-Herter Series; Box 6. The cable was cleared by Eisenhower himself, which was quite unusual. Indeed, the President later recalled favorably that Bohlen was to stress "that every word in it had my approval." Eisenhower, The White House Years: Waging Peace, p. 71.

at a diplomatic reception on October 30, duly emphasizing the paragraph of reassurance from the Dallas speech.⁵²² But Bohlen reported back to Dulles that the Soviet leaders still seemed unimpressed, and later he concluded that unfortunately "the assurance carried no weight." Like Murphy and others in the Administration, Bohlen was sure that the Soviet leadership had already "made up their minds to crush the revolution" and that the problem with the statements of reassurance was not that they were pandering, appeasing, or otherwise inappropriate but only that they were delivered too late.⁵²³

It would be tempting to suggest with thirty years of hindsight some of the steps which the Administration should have taken to try to prevent a Soviet invasion, but it is not necessary to draw up such a list. It turns out that the American Legation in Budapest, though operating under highly

522. USMoscow 1005, October 30, 1956. DDELib, AWF; Dulles-Herter Series; Box 6.

523. Bohlen, Witness to History, p. 413. Whatever Bohlen might have thought, it seems to me that the Soviet decision to crush the Revolution was not made until after the three American guarantees of non-interference, probably on October 31. See Chapter 5. If the American reassurances had any effect on the Soviet decision, they almost certainly helped encourage, not discourage, a Soviet invasion. When the President himself finally made the same promise of non-involvement in an address to the nation on October 31, the Soviet leadership probably had already decided to intervene in Hungary. If so, this fourth American reassurance might indeed have been the most reassuring in the Kremlin: "We have also, with respect to the Soviet Union, sought clearly to remove any false fears that we would look upon new governments in these Eastern European countries as potential military allies." Address by Eisenhower, October 31, 1956, reprinted in the Department of State Bulletin 35 (no. 907, November 12, 1956).

difficult conditions and without a chief of mission (Minister Ravndal had been withdrawn in August and his replacement, Edward Wailes, did not arrive until November 2), throughout the crisis offered to Washington policy recommendations which, if followed, might have made the most of the indecisiveness and factional splits on the part of the Soviet leadership. Unfortunately, the Legation's suggestions were uniformly ignored. On October 23, for example, even before Nagy's accession to the Premiership, the Legation reported that the insistent calls made by Hungarians at public meetings on October 16 and on October 22 for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary direly needed a powerful American echo:

Legation recommends that coverage, especially as regards demands [for the] withdrawal [of] Soviet troops, be fast so that maximum advantage be taken of [the] ever-mounting demands of [the] Hungarians. These two meetings give [the American] media their first opportunity to break [the] long US silence on [the] question [of] Soviet troops maintained here. In addition to media [coverage] following in [the] wake of Hungarian demands and giving attention to them, Legation feels Department might ... now all the more reconsider its policy of maintaining official silence on [the] question of [the] legal status of Soviet troops here.⁵²⁴

It would seem, then, that a full ten days before Imre Nagy supposedly caught the US off guard by calling upon the Four Powers to provide the setting for discussing a Soviet military withdrawal from Hungary, the American Legation had already put its finger on the crux of the problem with the Administration's policy toward Hungary. Why was the United States not making it

524. USBudapest 151, October 23, 1956. Archives 764.00/10-2356. My italics.

known that the Warsaw Treaty was a sham, that the Soviet Union had no basis for keeping its troops in Hungary? Why was Eisenhower not insisting that those forces be withdrawn? The Legation saw little risk to the US in calling upon Khrushchev to withdraw from Hungary, an assessment which in my view was accurate.

This suggestion was not rejected outright by the State Department, and on October 25 the White House did indeed issue a statement implying that the United States considered the presence of Soviet troops in Hungary to be illegitimate. The statement read:

The United States deplores the intervention of Soviet military forces which under the Treaty of Peace [February 1947] should have been withdrawn and the presence of which in Hungary, as is now demonstrated, is not to protect Hungary against armed aggression from without, but rather to continue an occupation of Hungary by the forces of an alien government for its own purposes.⁵²⁵

Nevertheless, although this was a good start, neither in this speech nor at any point during the Hungarian crisis was any unequivocal official American statement ever made declaring that the United States wanted to see the Soviet forces actually

525. Quoted in Eisenhower, The White House Years: Waging Peace, pp. 65-66. The President should not have cited only the 1947 treaty, though, because that treaty (in Article 22) explicitly authorized the Soviet Union to keep unlimited forces in Hungary so long as there were Soviet troops in Austria. According to one of the Hungarian participants in the 1947 Peace Conference in Paris, the American agreement to sign the 1947 treaty "implicitly gave the stamp of legality to the Soviet position established in Eastern Europe at the close of hostilities." See Kertész, Between Russia and the West, pp. 179-180. See also Ferenc A. Váli, "The Hungarian Revolution and International Law," The Fletcher Review 2 (no. 1, Summer 1959).

withdrawn from Hungary.⁵²⁶ This was perfectly consistent, however, with the Administration's policy since May 1955, when the Warsaw Pact was first established: both Eisenhower and Foster Dulles had preferred not to insist - either publicly or (as far as is known) in diplomatic contacts - that Soviet troops be withdrawn from Hungary and Romania, as they originally were to have been in the event of a Soviet pullout from Austria. By October 27, the lack of any vigorous response by the Administration to the bloodshed in Hungary prompted the Legation to cable angrily that the "US cannot by complete inaction condone Soviet exercises of their military capabilities in suppressing this struggle."⁵²⁷ As with its earlier suggestion for official American statements calling upon the Kremlin to withdraw its troops from Hungary, the Legation again tried to prod the Administration into action:

Legation believes it to be in [the] US interest, in view of [the] widespread and violent reaction against Communist rule by [the] Hungarian people, that careful consideration be given to [the] means for supporting [the] insurgent population and that some risk is

526. Only after the Soviet Army had intervened on November 4, by which point American pressure was pointless, did the President call for a withdrawal of Soviet troops (and in that case he referred only to the forces which had entered Hungary after October 23). In a letter to Bulganin on November 5, which the Politburo no doubt tossed aside, Eisenhower finally urged that "the Soviet Union take action to withdraw Soviet forces from Hungary immediately." Eisenhower, The White House Years: Waging Peace, p. 87. See also Branyan and Larsen, The Eisenhower Administration, 1953-1961: A Documentary History, pp. 671-672.

527. USBudapest 168, October 27, 1956. Archives 764.00/10-2756.

warranted by [the] emergence of this tremendous revulsion against Soviet domination.⁵²⁸

The cable acknowledged that there were "legalistic" and "practical" difficulties involved in trying to supply the insurgents with material or military support, but pointed out that the United States could certainly and immediately "lead and vigorously press [the] Hungarian case in [the] UN," "mobilize world opinion against [the] ruthless suppression of [the] Hungarian insurgents by Soviet power," and most importantly, insist that the United Nations sponsor Hungarian-Soviet negotiations which would seek the "withdrawal of Soviet troops, at least to garrisons."⁵²⁹ In the Legation's estimation (and I believe they were correct), the Soviet leadership was "searching for some solution" and at least for the time being was prepared to enter into some form of formal talks with the Hungarians. The key was that the United States would have to act quickly to put forward a "satisfactory proposal" that "might have some chance of acceptability."⁵³⁰ Yet the Eisenhower Administration chose to

528. Ibid. My italics.

529. Ibid.

530. Ibid. This cable was one of those which did not reach Washington until October 29, two days after it had been drafted, though the Legation staff considered the message important enough that a shortened version was sent over the British radio link on the 27th. But even the delay in receiving the full text was by no means fatal, because if the Administration had pushed for Hungarian-Soviet negotiations even on October 29 or 30 (particularly if made in conjunction with strong US backing for the British and French at Suez - see below), whether under United Nations or

ignore this suggestion entirely.

Interestingly, unlike Murphy, Beam, and most of Eisenhower's top advisors, the staff of the Legation in Budapest seemed to recognize at the height of the crisis that the Soviet leadership was divided and that at least one faction within the Kremlin was possibly prepared to accept the Hungarian Revolution as a fait accompli. On October 29 the Legation spelled out in concise and insightful fashion its explanation for Moscow's tentative behavior in Hungary to that point:

One guess might be [that there is] evenly divided influence at [the] moment between [those] Soviet political thinkers who favor iron fist action and those for [a] moderate course. If this is [a] good guess and [the] west['s] reaction [is] weak-kneed in this crisis, [then it] would appear [that the] scale would tip in favor [of the] iron fist school. [The] Legation would recommend [the] pressure on [the] Soviets to be heavy and in any possible form that appears compatible with Washington['s] assessment of [the] risks.⁵³¹

Unfortunately, the Legation's cogent logic did not affect the Administration's thinking, even though the National Security Council had acknowledged earlier in the year that the Soviet leadership was divided and that Soviet forces were overextended.

Commentators on the Hungarian Revolution periodically have maintained that the United States should have made more of an effort to airdrop or smuggle military supplies to the Hungarian freedom fighters, but, as the Legation seems to have recognized, this was not only logistically difficult but also unnecessary.

other auspices, the Soviet leadership still might well have accepted.

531. USBudapest 177, October 29, 1956. Archives 661.64/10-2956. This cable reached Washington immediately.

From the earliest days of the Revolution it had been clear to observers in Budapest that most Hungarian Army units were either refusing to fire upon the crowds or joining the revolutionaries altogether. Only a relatively small group of Sovietized Hungarian officers assisted the Soviet intervention. In most cases, the troops who went over to the freedom fighters took their weapons with them, and often opened the storehouses of weapons and ammunition to the fighters in the streets. Then having committed themselves to the side of the Revolution, the officers and soldiers from the Hungarian Army contributed their skills in military organization and tactics as well, which the students and workers - though undeniably courageous - were for the most part lacking.⁵³² Since the goal of the freedom fighters was not to defeat the Soviet armed divisions in open battle but only to demonstrate the Hungarian population's desire for independence and to try to persuade the Soviet authorities that a continuation of the occupation of Hungary would be not be worth the trouble, the revolutionaries already had all the light arms they would need. Once thousands of Hungarians had shown their willingness - and ability - to fight, then the fulfillment of the popular goal of a Soviet withdrawal from the country, or even of the first steps in that direction, would depend on forceful political and diplomatic pressure on the Kremlin, which was

532. For perhaps the most authoritative account of the role of the Hungarian military during the Revolution, see Béla K. Király, "Hungary's Army: Its Part in the Revolt," East Europe 7 (no. 6, June 1958).

something which the Hungarians alone could not provide.⁵³³ This is a point which the leading players in the Revolution have all emphasized. Béla Király, who was Pál Maléter's deputy in command of all Hungarian Revolutionary forces, told the author that "we needed diplomatic help, we needed other help, but we did not need a Soviet-American battle on the Danube,"⁵³⁴ while George Heltai added that Nagy's government "expressly asked the West not to supply us with any form of military aid. What we wanted was diplomatic help."⁵³⁵ Endre Márton, who had close ties to Nagy and many of his advisors, concurred, stressing that "what disappointed us most about the United States response was not that there were no efforts to assist us militarily, but that there was no American diplomatic pressure against Moscow."⁵³⁶

533. The vast majority of the tens of thousands of workers and students who made up the freedom fighter forces seem to have sincerely believed that the West would take up their cause in the world's diplomatic circles once they demonstrated their willingness to die for their country's independence. As one seventeen-year old girl in the ranks of the revolutionaries said, the Hungarian fighters hoped that "by drawing the attention of the world to what is happening they will compel the Russians to get out." Victor Zorza, Manchester Guardian, October 29, 1956. Reprinted in Lasky, The Hungarian Revolution, p. 123. See also the testimony of the nearly 500 refugees interviewed in the wake of the Revolution by Columbia University's Oral History Project; Hungarian Refugee Project Manuscripts; Bakhmeteff Archives; Columbia University.

534. See Appendix I.

535. The full text of Heltai's interview is in Appendix F. For an analysis of Hungarian-American contacts during the Revolution, see the next section, Ignoring Opportunities.

536. Appendix M.

But Eisenhower was thinking in completely different terms. The reasoning within the Administration seems to have been that because the United States did not have overland military access to Hungary, there was automatically no effective role that the US could play in support of the Revolution. Eisenhower describes in his memoirs how he came to the conclusion that there was nothing the United States could do:

I still wonder what would have been my recommendation to the Congress and the American people had Hungary been accessible by sea or through the territory of allies who might have agreed to react positively to the tragic fate of the Hungarian people. As it was, however, ... moving across neutral Austria, Titoist Yugoslavia, or Communist Czechoslovakia, was out of the question. The fact was that Hungary could not be reached by any United Nations or United States units without traversing such territory. ... Sending United States troops alone into Hungary through hostile or neutral territory would have involved us in general war. ... Though the [UN] General Assembly passed a resolution calling upon the Soviets to withdraw their troops,⁵³⁷ it was obvious that no mandate for military action could or would be forthcoming. I realized that there was no use going further into this possibility.⁵³⁸

The President concluded by claiming that the United States "did the only thing it could" to help Hungary by subsequently accepting thousands of Hungarian refugees, but although this was a noble act, it was surely not "the only thing" the Eisenhower Administration could have done to assist the Hungarians during the Revolution, since there were a whole range of diplomatic

537. As with Eisenhower's letter to Bulganin, though, this resolution was not passed until after November 4, and even then referred not to the thousands of Soviet troops which had been present in Hungary before October 23 but only to those which participated in the second Soviet intervention.

538. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Waging Peace, pp. 88-89.

options which the Administration eschewed. In addition to leaping to conclusions, Eisenhower's defense of American non-involvement also smacks of disingenuousness. The President claimed that he "still wondered" what he would have ordered done (he needn't have waited for a Congressional mandate) if a Hungary-type uprising had occurred in an area bordering NATO (for instance, Czechoslovakia), but this disclaimer is not as relevant as one might at first have thought, because Eisenhower had already noted that he was guided in 1956 by the belief that Khrushchev might "resort to extreme measures" or "even ... start a world war" if the Soviet hold over the satellites were threatened.⁵³⁹ It was precisely this misplaced conviction - the entirely unsubstantiated premise that Khrushchev and his colleagues in the Soviet leadership were prepared to go to any length to retain Soviet control over Hungary - which was the reason why Eisenhower was unwilling to allow even the appearance

539. According to William Ewald, one of Eisenhower's White House staffers at the time, the President made this point before the NSC on October 26, but added an analogy between the Soviet Communists and the Nazis: "After all," Eisenhower was reported to have said, by way of explaining why the United States could not hope to come to the Hungarians' support, "Hitler knew in February of '45 that he was licked. But he kept on, pulling down Europe with him in defeat." See William Bragg Ewald, Jr., Eisenhower the President: Crucial Days, 1951-1960 (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1981), p. 211. Eisenhower's analogy was inappropriate for several reasons, but primarily because the World War II Allies had not used their alleged fear of Hitler's "extreme measures" to abstain from opposing the Third Reich, as Eisenhower now proposed the US do with respect to the Soviet occupation of Hungary. Moreover, the nations which were supposedly "pulled down" in Germany's defeat believed that liberation was worth the temporary destruction involved. Hungarians felt the same way in 1956, but they never sought anything more than diplomatic and political support.

of American support for the Hungarians. Apologists for the Administration have offered numerous explanations of why Eisenhower did not take any steps to try to prevent the defeat of the Revolution, but these all miss the point. It is true that the hospitalization of John Foster Dulles on November 3, the demands of a Presidential campaign and an imminent national election, the absence of an American Minister in Budapest for most of the crisis, and the simultaneous British, French, and Israeli attack on Egypt all hampered the Administration's ability to assume a strong stance toward Hungary, but none of these factors would have intimidated an American leader who was willing to take certain risks for the cause of liberty.

For its part, the Legation in Budapest was not satisfied by the three promises of American non-involvement made by the Administration to the Soviet leadership. Two days after Bohlen's sycophantic performance in Moscow, the Legation cabled its own suggested Presidential statement regarding the events in Hungary, which included a pledge for economic assistance and "within [a] short time for increased contacts with Hungary in all fields."⁵⁴⁰ Without waiting to find out whether Eisenhower would make a public statement along these lines, the Legation forwarded a second, more suggestive, text to Washington. Arguing that the "potentiality of US influence in this period is tremendous,"

540. USBudapest 201, October 31, 1956. Archives 764.00/10-3156. In his Dallas speech, Secretary Dulles had already offered economic aid to Hungary, but the Legation was right to urge that the offer be reiterated and tied together with other types of cooperation as well.

which the leading thinkers in the Administration seemed to disbelieve, Barnes called upon the White House to issue the following statement:

[The] US continues to watch events in Hungary with great interest and earnestly hopes that [the] restoration of law and order, which has already begun, can be continued. ... It is hoped that economic discussions can be begun with [the] provisional Government of Hungary within [a] short time. Any changes in [the] Government due to later free elections in Hungary, would not (rpt would not), of course, affect the results of those discussions.⁵⁴¹

The implication that free elections should take place in Hungary was a suggestion which the supremely defensive-minded President was not willing even to consider. This was particularly ironic, because while on the one hand the Administration was extremely reluctant to have any American dealings with Imre Nagy on the grounds that he was at heart just another Communist, on the other it now refused to call upon the Hungarian regime to allow any efforts toward genuine democracy. The Eisenhower Administration seemed to be doing its best to eliminate any possible source of American influence in Hungary.

From the Hungarians' perspective, Eisenhower's behavior seemed hard to understand. Politically sophisticated Hungarians never expected outright American military intervention (whereas a casual listener to Radio Free Europe might have assumed that the United States would try to intervene), but that did not mean that they would have been very surprised if the US had threatened - even in a subtle way - to intervene. And the fact was that at

541. USBudapest 210, November 1, 1956. Archives 764.00/11-156. Legation's parentheses.

any point during the crisis, Eisenhower could have taken any one of a number of conceivable steps indicating heightened American concern with the situation in Hungary. The President could have ordered American forces worldwide onto a higher state of alert, noisily flown a squadron of bombers over to England, sent the (relatively few) US troops in West Germany into demonstrative maneuvers near the Austrian or inter-German borders, dispatched a group of warships up the Adriatic, or "accidentally" overflowed Hungarian territory. Or Eisenhower might have offered to travel by person to Budapest to meet with the new leaders (in 1952, for instance, during another fight against a Soviet-backed Communist regime, he pledged to visit Korea) or perhaps have sent a high-level delegation, possibly headed up the Vice President and including a few generals, on a "fact finding" visit to Vienna or Belgrade.⁵⁴² Any of these measures would have signaled to the Kremlin that the government of the United States did not accept the Soviet leadership's claimed right to do as they saw fit in Eastern Europe. After all, hadn't the Eisenhower Administration been maintaining precisely this position in its public statements (and internal guidelines, though they were usually ignored) for the four previous years? Indeed, if Eisenhower really had wanted to stress the point, he could even have threatened to send

542. A few weeks after the Revolution had been crushed, Nixon did in fact visit Vienna and the Hungarian border area. It was a reflection of extent to which many of Eisenhower's top officials were unwilling to take risks that even at this late date Ambassadors Thompson and Bohlen still vehemently objected to the Nixon visit as unnecessarily provocative and tried to have it canceled. De Silva, Sub Rosa, The CIA and the Uses of Intelligence, p. 132.

"volunteers" into Hungary to fight the "imperialists" (in this case the Red Army). Since Khrushchev was to threaten the following week to do exactly that in Egypt, the Soviet leadership seems to have believed that this was how a world power had to act when it wanted to see its interests prevail.⁵⁴³ Moreover, given that the United States had tremendous advantages over the USSR in nuclear weapons and delivery systems at the time, the men in the Kremlin would have had to think matters over very carefully before deciding to defy an American leadership that seemed willing to risk war to force the Soviet Union out of Hungary.

Yet for any of these threats to have had any effect, Eisenhower and his advisors would have had to press the point from the very outbreak of hostilities in Hungary. It would have been difficult to do so after having abstained in the wake of the Albanian fiasco from doing anything tangible to challenge Moscow's domination of Eastern Europe, but the heroic sacrifices of the Hungarians might conceivably have altered the picture enough to have given any American assertiveness new credibility

543. Miklós Vásárhelyi, Nagy's advisor from the New Course Premiership to the Romanian imprisonment, agrees that by Soviet logic, suggestive American military and political signaling on the Hungarians' behalf would have been a much more effective policy toward the Revolution:

Eisenhower did the worst thing possible - he assured the Russians that the US was not interested in Hungary. Khrushchev could see that there were no American military preparations or alerts, that the United States wasn't even trying to bluff, so by his way of thinking he would have been a fool not to take advantage of the situation.

See Vásárhelyi's interview with the author, Appendix R.

in Soviet eyes. Naturally there wouldn't have been any silly American "reassurances" to the Soviet leadership in this scenario, because the President wouldn't have wanted Khrushchev to be too sure about anything. Nor would American diplomacy have been complacent. Ambassadors and ministers in every capital would have been instructed to impress upon their Soviet colleagues that the Soviet occupation of Hungary was unacceptable and would have to be terminated. References to Russia's overextended armies, strained economy, and relatively disadvantageous nuclear posture would not have been discouraged. János Radványi, a Hungarian diplomat with long experience dealing with Soviet representatives and in the 1960s Kádár's chief of mission in Washington, told the author that in his opinion an assertive American policy toward Hungary not only would have given the Soviet leadership food for thought but might also have helped give the Hungarian revolutionaries time to get better organized and consolidate their control over the country:

If Eisenhower hadn't announced three times that the United States had no intention of taking military steps to help Hungary, then maybe Imre Nagy could have had a chance to stabilize the situation. Khrushchev was always conscious of the American nuclear superiority, and would caution us not to provoke the United States. So there is no advantage, when dealing with the Russians, in making your intentions known; let the Kremlin worry about the possible consequences of their actions.⁵⁴⁴

To have followed this prescription, however, would have required a leader who was not satisfied with the status quo and who believed that a more forward and daring policy was necessary if

544. See Appendix N.

Soviet territorial or imperial gains were to be reversed. In short, the President would have had to be prepared to take certain risks, and Eisenhower was altogether unwilling to do so.

In this context, though, it must be mentioned that at least one top official in the Eisenhower Administration did call for an aggressive American policy in defense of the Hungarians. Bob Amory, the Deputy Director of Intelligence at CIA, recommended that the United States issue an ultimatum to Khrushchev, in which it would be demanded that the Soviet Union evacuate Hungary at once. Amory, who recalled that, unlike many others in the government, he was trying "to come up with a strategy that might conceivably work," went beyond the various potential diplomatic, political, and military means of signaling American intentions suggested above and actually called for a US strike on Red Army staging areas north and east of Hungary. In Amory's words, he was convinced that Khrushchev and his partners in the Kremlin

probably concluded that they did not have enough force presently on Hungarian soil to carry out a successful campaign of total repression. Looking at their logistic problem, it was easy to see that the rail and road links into Hungary from the east are tenuous and could be virtually put out of operation by what is now called a surgical nuclear strike limited to Lvov in Soviet-annexed Poland and selected passes in the mountains of Russian Ruthenia and Western Rumania.⁵⁴⁵

Or, as Amory told the author, "I recommended that ... either they keep their hands off Hungary or we would not be responsible for

545. Robert Amory, Jr., "Hungary '56 - A Subjective/Objective Account," Paper Delivered before the Literary Society of Washington, DC, March 15, 1975, pp. 21-22.

whatever happened next."⁵⁴⁶ Amory hoped that the President or the Secretary of State would consider the draft ultimatum, but Allen Dulles did not want to usurp his brother's domain in foreign affairs and therefore told Amory first to bring his proposed ultimatum before the other members of the NSC Planning Board. Amory did so, but his suggestion of a possible nuclear strike on Soviet territory was quickly rejected by the Board.⁵⁴⁷ Even if the proposal had ever crossed Eisenhower's desk, however, there is little chance that the President would have given it any serious thought. Despite the New Look concept of "Massive Retaliation," by which the United States would supposedly respond to any form of Soviet aggression, Eisenhower never anticipated using nuclear weapons unless the US was already at war. Even then such weapons were not to be used for "political purposes," but only to try to end the war. In fact, only a few months before the Hungarian Revolution, Eisenhower stressed to Foster Dulles that "even though we had superiority in atomic weapons, we should, if it were practicable, bring about their elimination."⁵⁴⁸ This was not a President who was likely to threaten the Soviet leadership with a nuclear strike if they did not evacuate Hungary. Yet there were others who apparently supported the idea of an ultimatum. According to Amory, in the

546. See Appendix A.

547. Amory, "Hungary '56," and interview with the author, Appendix A.

548. "Memorandum of Conversation with the President at the White House," August 11, 1956, 8:30 AM. John Foster Dulles Papers, Seeley D. Mudd Library, Princeton University.

midst of the crisis he had a discussion with the Danish Ambassador to the US, Heinrich Kauffman, who, when asked whether Eisenhower should take steps to try "to preserve Hungarian independence even at substantial risk of all-out war in Europe," is said to have replied:

But of course you must - my little country will be overrun in hours as it was in 1940 but it will endure and survive - this may well be your greatest and last opportunity to turn the cold war decisively in favor of the free world - it is a tragedy that arrogance and myopia here and in London and Paris are paralyzing us all.⁵⁴⁹

Nevertheless, Amory's call for an ultimatum to the Soviet leadership never made it past the NSC Planning Board, while the Eisenhower Administration eschewed the many possibilities for signaling serious US concern over events in Hungary which were far less drastic than what Amory suggested.

Seemingly, then, the predominant view in the Administration, from the President on down, was that the United States should take no chances for Hungary's sake. There was no consideration given to the fact that perhaps by standing up for freedom in Hungary the United States would be standing up for freedom everywhere. Nor was it noted that in so doing the US might well be dealing a blow to Moscow's ability to impose Communist regimes elsewhere in the future. Rather, the relevant officials, concerned only with the immediate logistical problems at hand, took a defeatist, if not apathetic, position on what was taking place in Hungary. As Jacob Beam, the Deputy Assistant of State

549. Amory, "Hungary '56," p. 25. For the impact of the events in Suez on US policy toward Hungary, see the next section.

dealing with Eastern Europe insisted, "It's unrealistic to think that we would mess around in that part of the world," since a Soviet invasion was "probably inevitable" anyway.⁵⁵⁰ But the bottom line is that even if the Soviet leadership had come to the conclusion that the political or military signaling which the Eisenhower Administration might have decided to enact was only a bluff, that is to say, if the Red Army had gone ahead and crushed the Revolution despite the American posturing, then American prestige and interests would hardly have been significantly more damaged than they in fact were by what took place between October 23 and November 4, 1956. Although when all was said and done the Kremlin might still have gone ahead with the invasion, we will never know what a vigorous American diplomatic or political-

550. For Beam's comments, see Appendix B. Incredibly enough, various well-known analysts of East European affairs later suggested that during the key moments of the Hungarian crisis the United States should have offered the Soviet leadership an American withdrawal from all of Western Europe, the logic being that this could have made "the loss of the satellite empire strategically tolerable for Russia." In my view, this line of thinking was only the "need to reassure the Kremlin" school of thought taken to its extreme. The result would have been only an even greater certainty on the part of the Soviet faction demanding intervention in Hungary that unrestrained military action there carried with it no risks of a possible conflict with the United States. With Soviet forces now immune from American retaliation, waverers in the Politburo would have been wholly unable to hold out against the pro-invasion faction. For a lengthy but misguided articulation of why the offer of a US pullout from Europe might have saved Hungary, see Richard Lowenthal, "Hungary - Were We Helpless?" The New Republic 135 (no. 22, November 26, 1956). See also Alvin J. Cottrell and Walter F. Hahn, "If We Agree to Withdraw U. S. Forces from Western Europe, Will Eastern Europe Witness a Soviet Withdrawal?" The New Leader 40 (no. 3, January 21, 1957).

military commitment to a Soviet withdrawal from Hungary might have accomplished.

Ignoring Opportunities

The unwillingness on the part of the Eisenhower Administration to pressure the Kremlin either publicly or behind the scenes for a withdrawal of all Soviet forces from Hungary was matched by an inexplicable failure to provide Imre Nagy's regime with any type of support, even if only diplomatic. Given that the President was not prepared to push for free elections in Hungary, let alone to signal in a vigorous fashion US support for the Revolution, one might have thought that the Administration would have made an effort to work with the regime which had now come to power in Budapest. By October 28 or 29, as Eisenhower became better aware that Imre Nagy was calling upon Soviet forces to withdraw from Budapest and for a review of the status of all Soviet forces in Hungary, it should have been apparent that Nagy's regime - though hardly democratic - was pursuing a course that potentially represented the most effective blow to Moscow's position in Eastern Europe since Tito had survived Stalin's efforts to unseat him.

American approaches to Nagy potentially could have taken several forms, but would most sensibly have included contacts between the US Legation and Nagy's government, perhaps leading to American efforts to widen Hungarian-Soviet negotiations into a Four-Power or otherwise multilateral international issue. Opportunities for doing so emerged quickly. On October 28, the

Legation (still headed by only the Chargé d'Affaires) cabled that if the Western powers would only take a diplomatic initiative to play up the gains that the Hungarian fighters had already made on the ground, then the Soviet leadership "might be willing [to] extricate themselves from [the] present situation through an armistice followed by negotiations."⁵⁵¹ Two days later, in the wake of the devastating three American reassurances to Moscow, the Legation reported that there was still time to establish an "international commission to negotiate [a] guaranteed settlement." In the Legation's opinion, the cable continued, it seemed that all but the most uncompromising of the revolutionaries throughout the country might be prepared to drop their more maximal demands "in return for [an] international guarantee of [the] withdrawal [of] Soviet troops in some stipulated period of time."⁵⁵² The report went on to suggest, as the Legation by now had done at least twice before, that Khrushchev might be prepared to withdraw Soviet forces from Hungary under certain conditions:

[The] Soviets conceivably, altho[ugh] admittedly much less likely, might be willing [to] consent [to an] international guarantee of troop withdrawal if relieved of [the] bogey of free elections and [if] satisfied [that the] incumbent government [were] neither "bourgeois" nor anti-Soviet. ... Despite [the] fact that as matters now stand Nagy's chance of forming [a] rallying point for Hungarians and [a] bridge for [the] Soviets seems [to] be decreasing daily, an international agreement on Soviet troop withdrawal

551. USBudapest 171, October 28, 1956. Archives 764.00/10-2856.

552. USBudapest 188, October 30, 1956. Archives 764.00/10-2856.

might again restore Nagy's rallying capacity and also allow him [to] remain acceptable to [the] Soviets.⁵⁵³

Nevertheless, there was apparently no response from Washington to these proposals other than halfhearted efforts by the State Department's various European missions to try to drum up Allied support for the US position in the UN Security Council, but even this had little effect, since Eisenhower by then had made Suez the government's priority. It would seem that just as the Administration was not prepared to act on its own and call for the withdrawal of all Soviet troops from Hungary, so it was now not prepared to insist that Soviet-Hungarian negotiations on the status of Soviet forces take place.⁵⁵⁴

Part of the reason why the Eisenhower Administration did not attempt to establish a setting for Soviet-Hungarian negotiations in which the Hungarian side would not be placed at an automatic disadvantage was that to a great extent Imre Nagy's regime was seen in Washington as illegitimate. The fact that Rákosi, Gerö, and their gang of thugs had been replaced by a regime whose leader was widely known in Hungary to be seeking some measure of

553. Ibid.

554. On November 1, the Hungarian government formally requested assistance from the US, France, and Britain in securing an international setting for a discussion of the status of Soviet forces in Hungary, but at no point before then did the American representatives try to develop such negotiations. See below.

Tom Rogers, who drafted many of the Legation's cables quoted in this chapter, confirmed that as far he knew (and he was in the best position to have known), the Administration never pursued the suggestions for negotiations or for an international commission which the Legation recommended. See Appendix O.

relaxation of state control was considered less important than the fact that Nagy was himself a Communist - and one, at that, who in American eyes was not moving quickly enough to meet the revolutionaries' demands. That the United States government was itself doing absolutely nothing to strengthen Nagy's ability to achieve those same demands was seemingly overlooked. On October 29, at the outset of a three day period during which the fate of the Hungarian Revolution was probably decided, Secretary Dulles told a colleague that there was no sense in giving the new Ambassador-designate to Hungary, Edward Wailes, a top-level message to bring with him to Budapest, "because the present government [in Hungary] is not one we want to do much with."⁵⁵⁵ This incredible view was expressed despite the fact that only the very day before, Imre Nagy had announced that an agreement had been reached with Soviet officials in Hungary on the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Budapest and that talks with the USSR would soon begin regarding the removal of Soviet forces from all of Hungary and the establishment of more equitable Soviet-Hungarian relations.⁵⁵⁶ What more could Dulles have expected? After all, only four days had elapsed since Gerő's downfall and despite their heroics the Hungarians were still standing alone before the

555. "Telephone Call to Mr. Shanley [presumably Bernard Shanley, one of Stassen's associates]," October 29, 1956, 10:56 AM. DDELib, JFD Papers; Phone Call Series; Box 11. In my opinion, Dulles' comment accurately epitomized the perspective on Hungary throughout the top level of the Eisenhower Administration.

556. The New York Times, October 29, 1956, p. 1.

Red Army.⁵⁵⁷ Yet the Eisenhower Administration conducted itself as though the Nagy regime were as anathema as its predecessor. Throughout the Hungarian crisis, relatively little urgency was attached to the need for an American policy (unlike in Suez, where Eisenhower's response was immediate and forceful), and there was almost no recognition of the fact that while Nagy's regime was clearly imperfect, it nonetheless represented perhaps the only chance of uniting the various forces of the Revolution, given enough time, into a regime sufficiently well organized and directed to survive.

Not only was the Administration unimpressed with Imre Nagy, however, but the US Legation in Budapest was not even instructed to make contact with him or with any of his top advisors in order to try to find out just exactly what Nagy hoped to achieve. Indeed, for the most part the Legation was simply not given any instructions at all, which by this point the reader should not find too surprising, since there was no policy. According to Tom Rogers, the head of the Legation's Political section,

There were never any instructions [from State], even after communications between Washington and Budapest were reopened. The only "guidance" we ever received were copies of the State Department's public statements on the situation in Hungary.⁵⁵⁸

557. And only two days later the State Department itself was reporting to all European posts that "[The] Dep[artmen]t [is] inclined [to] feel [that the] Soviets [are] willing [to] depart Hungary if Nagy or a communist government can retain power." State 523, October 31, 1956. Archives 764.00/10-3156.

558. Rogers added that when he arrived in Vienna with the Legation's cables to be sent out, there were no instructions awaiting him. See Appendix O.

Jacob Beam, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Eastern European Affairs and to a large degree responsible for overseeing the State Department's policy toward Hungary, told the author that "things moved too fast" to send out any directives, although one might argue that a crisis is precisely the case in which timely instructions to one's agents in the field are most direly needed. But be that as it may, the fact was that for the duration of the Hungarian crisis (with the apparent exception of the decision to grant Cardinal Mindszenty asylum in the Budapest Legation) no special instructions were sent by Beam's office "to any of the missions in Eastern Europe, beyond keeping them informed of current developments and general policies."⁵⁵⁹ The Administration's near casualness in dealing with the Revolution and inability to appreciate that the United States might be able to play a positive role in influencing the course of events in Hungary was perfectly apparent to the staff of the Legation. Gaza Katona, Rogers' deputy in the Political section, reflected the Legation's frustration:

... the biggest problem we had was probably that there was no one in Washington who could give us immediate responses. When we recommended that certain Presidential pronouncements be made, or suggested various courses of action, there was no timely answer. Apparently there were just too many people to consult and offices to check with, and not enough time to communicate adequately.⁵⁶⁰

Katona added that even if there had been directives from Washington instructing the Legation to try to make contact with

559. Appendix B.

560. For Katona's interview with the author, see Appendix H.

the Hungarian regime, it would have been "just about impossible to get to Nagy," because of "the large number of anti-American subordinates who still "ruled the roost" and stood in the way." "Even toward the end of the Revolution," Katona continued, "there were plenty of old-line Communists still staffing the government ministries."⁵⁶¹ In this respect, however, the officials of the Legation were as unimaginative as their colleagues in the White House or the State Department, because none of them recommended that the Legation be authorized to try to meet with Imre Nagy, and none made any efforts to meet with Nagy on their own.

This reluctance to have anything to do with Imre Nagy was all the more surprising given that the leaders of the United States had already been officially sitting down with and dealing with various Communist regimes for several years. Ever since 1948, for instance, a succession of American ambassadors and top State Department officials, including Foster Dulles, had met with Tito, and Eisenhower himself had carried on a substantial correspondence with the Yugoslav leader, even though Tito's internal policies were at least as repressive, and probably more so, than anything Nagy was proposing. Similarly, at Geneva in July 1955, the President had spent several days meeting with a Soviet leadership that included many of Stalin's top collaborators, power-loving Communists who had helped carry out

561. Ibid. It is hard to know just what difficulties an American approach to Nagy might have encountered, had one been attempted. But I am inclined to believe that a US request to meet with Nagy would not have been completely rebuffed. At worst Barnes or Rogers would have been allowed to meet with one of Nagy's subordinates.

the deaths of thousands, if not millions of men. Yet for seeking out the views of these tyrants, Eisenhower and his advisors were widely hailed. Nor were Belgrade and Moscow the only Communist regimes with which the Eisenhower Administration carried on extensive discussions. From 1955 to 1958, the US Ambassador in Prague, U. Alexis Johnson, conducted negotiations regarding the Taiwan Straits with officials of the People's Republic of China, despite Mao's bitter anti-American stance during this period. Indeed, Eisenhower was closely involved in the progress of these talks.⁵⁶² But while discussions with Yugoslav, Soviet, and Chinese Communists were seen to be completely permissible, Imre Nagy's regime was shrugged aside as "not one we want to do much with" or merely ignored, even though unlike Tito, Khrushchev, or Mao, Nagy hoped to abolish state terror and give non-Communists a role in running the state: in the government that Nagy had established on October 27, several prominent members of the former Smallholders Party were assigned posts.⁵⁶³ Nevertheless, between October 23 and November 1, the only Hungarian government officials to have been approached by the US were representatives

562. Letter, Ambassador Johnson to the President, August 13, 1956. DDELib, AWF; International Series; Box 8. See also the Memorandum of Discussion of the 285th Meeting of the NSC, May 18, 1956, p. 3. DDELib, AWF; NSC Series; Box 8. For Johnson's account of the negotiations with the Chinese, see U. Alexis Johnson, The Right Hand of Power (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984), p. 186, 228-265.

563. The non-Communist Ministers included Béla Kovács and Zoltán Tildy, who were hardly political lightweights. See Barber, Seven Days of Freedom, pp. 243-244. The AVH was abolished on October 29.

of Gerő's regime.⁵⁶⁴ Imre Nagy and his supporters were left to themselves.

One must point out, however, that its own rhetoric of the four previous years notwithstanding, the Eisenhower Administration was under no obligation to take any steps to try to make the Hungarian Revolution successful. It was Imre Nagy and his comrades whose regime was at stake, and one could argue that if some type of American support for them could have helped deter a Soviet invasion, then they should have sought it. Yet until November 1 not a single effort was made by representatives of the Nagy government to try to come into contact with the United States Legation in Budapest. According to George Heltai, the principal reason for this was that Nagy (despite probable expectation of support from his mentor, Malenkov) was worried about the possible Soviet reaction:

Prior to November 1 any approach on our part toward the US would have been seen by the Russians as a provocation. We wanted first to stabilize the revolutionary achievements in Hungary and then lay down the groundwork of future policies.⁵⁶⁵

564. On October 27, the head of the Hungarian mission in Washington, Tibor Zádor, was summoned to the State Department in order to explain what was happening in Hungary. He claimed that "fascists" were loose in the streets of Budapest. State Department Memorandum of Conversation, October 27, 1956. Archives 764.00/10-2756. See also Radványi, Hungary and the Superpowers, pp. 7-8.

565. See Appendix F. Indeed, for the first few days after October 25, if not for longer, Nagy had a hard time keeping any of his decisions secret from Andropov or Khrushchev. Many of the officials in the Hungarian government had been placed there by Rákosi or Gerő, while the majority of the Hungarian Central Committee was still hostile to Nagy. Even the First Secretary, János Kádár, was in close contact with

Heltai went on to say, though, that he and Nagy expected that the United States for its own sake would bring pressure to bear on the Soviet leadership and that prodding from Nagy would not be necessary:

... the Suez crisis had been going on for two or three days already, and we thought that Suez would lead to negotiations between the Americans and the Russians, in which ... the US would put pressure on Moscow regarding Hungary. ... We all took for granted that the Revolution would have a tremendous impact on the future of Europe, and for that reason alone we expected Western diplomatic support. It was simply unimaginable to me that the United States would oppose its own allies in Egypt but fail to oppose the Soviet Union in Hungary.⁵⁶⁶

Still, in the final analysis it was naive and unrealistic for Imre Nagy and the other Hungarian leaders to have believed that any foreign state would act on their behalf if they did not first ask for that help. And Nagy must have known that his own background in the Hungarian Communist Party, not to mention as a wartime "Muscovite," was not likely to endear him to someone of John Foster Dulles' ilk.⁵⁶⁷ On the other hand, if Nagy had noted

the Soviet side. For an insider's view of this problem, see Miklós Vásárhelyi's interview with the author, Appendix R.

566. Appendix F.

567. Nor should it be forgotten that throughout this crisis Imre Nagy looked upon himself very much as a Communist, and as such viewed a possible approach to the government of the United States with the greatest reluctance. The point I wish to stress here is that once in power, a head of government must make decisions based primarily upon the interests of the state and only secondly upon personal ideological preference. In this case the survival of the Hungarian regime was at stake, and if some amount of shelving of Communist dogma was necessary in order to try to secure the regime's survival, then it should have been done; the "official history" could be fixed up later. Lenin,

to himself that the United States had managed to support Tito despite his very bloody Communist credentials (and Heltai has insisted that the Yugoslav precedent was very much on the Hungarians' minds), then he would not have been far wrong in observing that the Hungarian regime which he headed already could vouch for more genuine popular support than Belgrade ever could. What's more, where Tito only feared a military confrontation with the Red Army, the Hungarians were actually engaged in one. Certainly it would not have been inappropriate for Nagy to have concluded that if Truman had seen fit to send military supplies to the Yugoslavs when they were not even fighting, then Eisenhower would lend at least diplomatic support to embattled Hungary. Nevertheless, with his government's ability to survive in question almost from the day it was first established, Nagy could not afford to rely on assumptions. He should have instructed his aides to have determined - albeit by the most discreet means possible - what the American position genuinely was, and to have informed the US that diplomatic support would be welcomed.⁵⁶⁸ This was finally done on November 1, but only

Stalin, and Tito had all recognized this principle in their time, and Nagy's cause was hardly less noble than theirs.

568. Apparently at least some of the Hungarian diplomatic representatives stationed in Western capitals (certainly excluding Zádor in Washington) wanted to seek out the host governments and ask for some type of assistance, but they were hampered by the role played by supporters of Rákosi and Gerő in their midst, by the virtual takeover of several Hungarian diplomatic missions by Soviet officials (as in the UN), by the few instructions which they received from Nagy, and by the fact that many of them "had no way to approach responsible politicians [in the West]; the overwhelming majority did not even speak the language of the countries to

because a Soviet invasion was already believed to be imminent. Action should have been initiated earlier.

In the meantime, the Eisenhower Administration had to decide how to evaluate the major statement on Soviet-East European relations which was published in Pravda on October 31. In the Declaration (actually issued on October 30), the Soviet leadership seemed to be confessing to past policy errors toward Hungary, acknowledging the legitimacy of the Revolution, and pledging to permit various economic reforms in Hungary. Perhaps more importantly, the Declaration also included the statement that

... the Soviet Government is prepared to engage in negotiations with the Hungarian People's Government and the other signatories of the Warsaw Pact regarding the question of the presence of Soviet troops elsewhere [outside Budapest, from where Soviet forces had already been ordered to withdraw] on the territory of Hungary.⁵⁶⁹

To the officials in the Administration who had advocated the three statements of reassurance to Moscow, the Soviet Declaration of October 30 must have seemed to bear out the wisdom of their advice. In this regard, it may have been with some level of satisfaction that the National Security Council met on November 1 to consider the first draft of the NSC Planning Board's suggested policy paper on the events in Poland and Hungary, NSC 5616. Consistent with the perceived need to reassure the Soviet

which they were accredited." Heltai, "International Aspects," p. 50.

569. "The Soviet '30 October Declaration,'" reprinted in Barber, Seven Days of Freedom, p. 242.

leadership, it was asserted in the Planning Board's draft that the possibilities for American support for the Hungarians were in practice very limited, since "Soviet suspicions of U. S. Policy and present circumstances which involve Soviet troop movements and alerts probably increase the likelihood of a series of actions and counter-actions leading inadvertently to war."⁵⁷⁰ Accordingly, the first point made in the report's section on "Courses of Action" toward Hungary was that in order to pursue the Administration's goal of "discouraging and, if possible, preventing further Soviet armed intervention in Hungary as well as harsh measures of repression or retaliation," the United States should "mobilize all appropriate pressures, including UN action, on the USSR against such measures, while reassuring the USSR [that] we do not look upon Hungary or the other Satellites as potential military allies."⁵⁷¹ The Joint Chiefs of Staff objected to the inclusion in the NSC policy paper of this fawning emphasis on reassurance, but it is a reflection of the support which the three American guarantees of non-involvement had acquired within the Administration that even two weeks after the Red Army and the KGB had crushed the Hungarian Revolution, when it should have been obvious that American policy had been (to be kind) ineffective, the NSC's final policy statement on Hungary

570. Draft, NSC 5616, "Interim U.S. Policy on Developments in Poland and Hungary," October 31, 1956, p. 5. DDELib, OSANSA; NSC Series, Policy Paper Subseries; Box 19. My italics.

571. Ibid., p. 7.

still included this same pledge of reassurance.⁵⁷² But at its crucial session of November 1, the National Security Council certainly could not have been expected to advocate anything other than further capitulatory pledges of reassurance when the President himself announced that he had no more interest than on October 26 in debating the options available to the US regarding Hungary. As the NSC Staff Secretary recorded at the time:

Upon entering the Cabinet Room from his office, the President informed the members of the Council that, except in so far as it was the subject of the DCI's intelligence briefing, he did not wish the Council to take up the situation in the Soviet satellites. Instead, he wished to concentrate on the Middle East.⁵⁷³

It should not seem surprising, therefore, that the Administration's few advocates of a more assertive approach toward the Revolution were unable to get very far or that the Soviet Declaration of October 30 seemed to vindicate the champions of the overly cautious course. Whichever their view, officials in the State Department were somewhat amazed that - whether in spite of their passivity or because of it they did not

572. In other words, the JCS objection was overruled. Compare the Planning Board Draft considered by the NSC on November 1 with NSC 5616/2, "Interim U.S. Policy on Developments in Poland and Hungary," November 19, 1956, p. 4. DDELib, OSANSA; NSC Series, Policy Paper Subseries; Box 19. It is worth adding that in this final draft, the NSC did not pause to note the US failure to prevent a Soviet invasion of Hungary, but instead casually substituted the word "terminating" for the words "discouraging" and "preventing" regarding Soviet armed intervention in Hungary and harsh measures of repression. Needless to say, the Administration was unable to achieve its new goal either.

573. Memorandum of Discussion of the 302nd Meeting of the NSC, November 1, 1956, p. 1. DDELib, AWF; NSC Series; Box 8.

all agree - the Hungarians had succeeded to the extent that they had,⁵⁷⁴ while even the normally skeptical Allen Dulles concluded that the statement in Pravda was "one of the most significant to have come out of the Soviet Union since the end of World War II."⁵⁷⁵

Nevertheless, it would be inaccurate to claim, as one writer on this period has done, that (whether because of the Pravda Declaration, thanks to the breakdown in communications between the US Legation and the State Department, or just due to wishful thinking) the Administration was left "in the happy feeling that the uprising had triumphed, that the Russians were pulling out."⁵⁷⁶ The truth was that Eisenhower and his advisors had very good information from a number of sources conclusively indicating extensive Soviet military activity around Hungary, though whether this reflected a precautionary step on the part of the Red Army or the lead-in to an invasion, analysts in Washington had not yet

574. From Vienna, for example, Ambassador Thompson argued that American non-involvement was still the best way to prevent Soviet suppression of the Revolution:

Although [the] US [is being] criticized for [its] failure [to] supply any plan or leadership to [the] rebels, this very fact has both weakened [the] Soviet case for intervention and deprived them [of] any specific center which they or [the] Communist government could capture in [an] effort [to] suppress [the] revolt.

USVienna 1022, October 31, 1956. Archives 764.00/10-3156.

575. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Waging Peace, p. 79. The President claimed to have told Dulles in return, "Yes, if it is honest."

576. David Irving, Uprising!, p. 9.

determined. In addition to such reports - for instance from the Embassy in Bucharest regarding Soviet troop movements across the Romanian-Hungarian border - the Administration was also receiving political and diplomatic data from the State Department's other posts in Eastern Europe and from the monitoring facilities of Radio Free Europe (particularly after October 31) suggesting that the Soviet leadership seemed to have decided to intervene. The consulate in Munich, for example, cabled the following on November 2:

As we read it here, Radio Moscow's latest ... coverage [of the] Hungarian situation ... from its ominous content leaves little doubt [that the] Kremlin [is] preparing [the] Soviet people for [the] announcement [of a] revolt crackdown in Hungary. [The] latest report received [in] Munich re[garding] Soviet troop movements tend[s to] confirm [the] foregoing.⁵⁷⁷

Meanwhile, the Administration had solid intelligence from the CIA concerning the prepositioning of Red Army troop and materials in the territory of the Soviet Ukraine. According to the account of Peer De Silva, the Vienna Station Chief, US agents were in close contact with employees of the Hungarian State Railway system, who were able to report from their telegraph net that Soviet railroad officials on the Soviet-Hungarian frontier were issuing "detailed and voluminous" requests for flatcars and boxcars, to be assembled on the Soviet side of the border. The specific numbers of the rail cars involved were forwarded to Washington, where

577. USMunich 213, November 2, 1956. Archives 764.00/11-256. The Munich consulate benefited closely from RFE's intelligence from Eastern Europe and research reports on Communist affairs. See Paul Henze's interview with the author, Appendix G.

analysts were able to determine that the Soviet command was calling up "rolling stock for eleven armored or infantry divisions from the Ukraine and points east to be moved into Hungary at the earliest possible moment."⁵⁷⁸ De Silva's conclusion is a strong refutation of the notion that the Administration was taken by surprise by the Soviet invasion or, by implication, by Nagy's declaration of Hungarian neutrality as an effort to try to prevent an invasion he knew to be imminent:

Our policymakers in Washington, by virtue of this intelligence from the Hungarians, had at least seven to ten agonizing days in advance to decide what, if anything, the United States might do to help the new Hungarian government or how the United Nations might help.⁵⁷⁹

One means of intelligence-gathering which the Administration apparently did not make use of, however, was the excellent high-elevation reconnaissance capability which had become available earlier in the year with the development of the U-2 airplane. Although the U-2's were used extensively to overfly the Eastern Mediterranean during the Suez crisis - first to monitor British naval preparations in the area, then to chart British, French, and Israeli air and ground attacks against Egypt, and finally to watch for any evidence of Soviet efforts to send their own forces

578. De Silva, Sub Rosa, The CIA and the Uses of Intelligence, p. 122. It was on the basis of this information that Bob Amory unsuccessfully called for a strike on the Soviet Carpatho-Ukraine if an American ultimatum to Moscow were not respected.

579. Ibid., p. 123.

into Egypt (there were none) - they do not seem to have been used to overfly Hungary.⁵⁸⁰

The use of U-2 airplanes to monitor British, French, and Israeli operations in the Mediterranean but not Soviet moves in Eastern Europe was indicative of the Administration's general willingness at the time to take steps against its own Allies which it was not prepared to risk against the Soviet Union.⁵⁸¹ Nowhere was this truer than in the United Nations, where the American delegation spent much more of its time orchestrating diplomatic maneuvers against Britain and France than trying to

580. The first U-2 flights over the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe took place in June 1956, but Soviet radar was able to spot the planes (in trial flights American radar could not) and Khrushchev responded with a stern note of protest which neither side, understandably, publicized. See Ambrose, Ike's Spies: Eisenhower and the Espionage Establishment (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), p. 272. The President responded by cutting back heavily in the number of flights over Communist territory. Ambrose tries to claim, however, that there were several U-2's "flying over East Europe to monitor Red Army activity during the Hungarian crisis," (Ibid., p. 273) but his only source is the record of a Presidential phone call from December 1956 which I believe is cited out of context. It seems that Ambrose recognized as much, because in his later book, Eisenhower: The President, he reprints his evaluation of the U-2 program almost verbatim, but drops any mention of flights over Eastern Europe during the Hungarian Revolution. According to another account, Eisenhower had banned all U-2 overflights of Eastern Europe and the USSR well before the outbreak of the Revolution and refused to reverse that decision even in the aftermath of Nagy's defeat. See Michael R. Beschloss, Mayday: Eisenhower, Khrushchev, and the U-2 Affair (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), p. 139. For his part, Bob Amory, who was in the best position to have known, maintains that no flights took place over Eastern Europe in this period. See Appendix A.

581. It should be mentioned, though, that the British were permitted to make use of the American U-2 photographs in the tactical assessments of their bombing runs over Egypt.

secure some level of effective UN support for the Revolution in Hungary. For example, after discussing the Hungarian Revolution on October 28 (and rather gingerly at that), the Security Council, at American insistence, spent the next five days dealing exclusively with the Suez crisis. During this period no action whatsoever was taken in the UN on the Hungarian question. Discussion of the events in Hungary was not resumed until November 2, and even then took place only following a formal request by the Nagy government to the UN Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld.⁵⁸² In the crucial four days prior to November 1 - the period during which the Soviet decision to intervene in Hungary was almost certainly made - there was no American effort

582. The transmission of the Hungarian note was received in New York at 12:21 PM on November 1, but it was not brought to Hammarskjöld's attention until nearly two hours later. Because Nagy's message requested only that the General Assembly discuss the issue, Hammarskjöld - who throughout the crisis showed little interest in pursuing debate on the question of the Soviet presence in Hungary or on any other aspect of the Hungarian Revolution - saw no need to convene the Security Council. On November 2, a second Hungarian note finally requested specifically that he do so. Imre Kovács, "The United States," in Király and Jónás, The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 in Retrospect, pp. 145-147. See also Brian McCauley, "Hungary and Suez, 1956: The Limits of Soviet and American Power," Journal of Contemporary History 16 (no. 4, 1981): pp. 792-793, and Radványi, Hungary and the Superpowers, pp. 14-16.

It was one measure of the difficulties Imre Nagy was facing in consolidating power that his efforts to try to have the Security Council ensure the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Hungary were hampered by events in Budapest. On November 2, a large group of revolutionaries, egged on by Soviet-backed provocateurs, besieged the headquarters of the Foreign Ministry in the belief that AVH officials were holed up inside. The ensuing "Battle of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs" caused the Foreign Ministry's cable transmissions to the United Nations temporarily to be broken off. See Király, "Military Aspects," in Király and Jónás, The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 in Retrospect, p. 65.

to bring the UN's attention back to Hungary's plight, whereas the British representatives (though their motives were hardly pure) repeatedly tried to return to the subject of Hungary. Indeed, when Foster Dulles traveled to New York on November 1 to make what was perhaps the Administration's most important address to the UN that year, he spoke at great length about the crisis in Suez but did not mention Hungary at all.⁵⁸³ On November 2, the Security Council's discussion of the Hungarian note was surprisingly brief, with the Council Members agreeing to study the Hungarian request overnight. The next day, US Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge called upon the Soviet Union to respect Nagy's declaration and to abstain from any further military action in Hungary. However, when Soviet Ambassador Arkady Sobolev and Imre Nagy's newly-named representative, János Szabó, replied that negotiations between Hungarian and Soviet delegations were already underway in Budapest regarding "technical questions involved in withdrawing the Soviet troops," the American side was satisfied.⁵⁸⁴ Having placed into the official United Nations record his call upon Moscow to abide by Nagy's declaration of Hungarian neutrality, Lodge was content to postpone further discussion of the Hungarian question to November 5 when the

583. Kovács, "The United States," p. 147.

584. According to George Heltai, Hammarskjöld tried to delay even this innocuous discussion of the Hungarian question by demanding "proof" that Nagy had actually signed Szabó's authorization to be Hungary's UN representative. See Heltai, "International Aspects," p. 55.

Yugoslavs (not surprisingly) proposed it.⁵⁸⁵ At the time, Lodge defended his quick acceptance of the Yugoslav motion by explaining that "We believe ... that adjournment for a day or two would give a real opportunity to the Hungarian government to carry out its announced desire to arrange for an orderly and immediate evacuation of all the Soviet troops."⁵⁸⁶ Unfortunately, though, by November 5 the need to prevent Soviet military intervention in Hungary had become academic, and the "Hungarian Question" deteriorated into an irrelevant debate over whether the UN should recognize the credentials of the Kádár regime's representatives.

As in most other facets of its policy toward the Hungarian Revolution, the posture taken by the Eisenhower Administration at the United Nations reflected a thorough lack of persistence and initiative. In the same way that there were no efforts in Washington to send high-level American delegations to Vienna, Belgrade, or Budapest (let alone to make any demonstrative military moves in support of the Hungarians), there were no American demands in the UN that a United Nations team be allowed to enter Hungary or that Hammarskjöld himself offer to visit

585. Radványi, Hungary and the Superpowers, p. 15. Nagy replaced Gerő's man in the UN, Pétér Kós (actually Leo Konduktorov, a Soviet citizen) with Szabó on October 29. But according to Radványi, Szabó was kept under "a special type of house arrest" by Gerőite Hungarian authorities during his brief (as it turned out) stay in New York. Szabó was well aware that if did not comply with Soviet demands "he might be physically eliminated."

586. Quoted by Endre Márton. See Márton, "Why Has the West Slept?" Foreign Service Journal 63 (no. 9, October 1986): p. 29.

Budapest. Such a mission, which left to his own devices Hammarskjöld was not at all inclined to favor, would have been a worthy indication of the concern with which the United Nations viewed the situation in Hungary, and in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion, this was a course of action which many observers suggested that the Eisenhower Administration should have urged. Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty, for instance, writing to Eisenhower six months later from his sanctuary in the Legation in Budapest, argued that a visit between October 28 and November 3 by UN representatives to Hungary "even for one day would have been worth more legally and practically than the half-year wandering over Europe by the present [United Nations] five-man [Special] committee." Mindszenty's bitterness in the wake of the defeat of the Revolution did not make him the most objective observer, but he was nevertheless correct to conclude that American policy in the UN toward the Revolution had been one of "missed opportunity," and that "exploitation of the best political possibilities for helping us did not materialize."⁵⁸⁷ Henry Cabot Lodge, on the other hand, was vehement in defending the performance of United States at the UN during the Hungarian crisis:

The record is not a sorry one. The record is a good one. Although it did not succeed in bringing about the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the United States has done things for the people of Hungary which no single country or other organization could have done. The steps which the United Nations has taken have played a useful part in preventing deportations; in bringing

587. Letter, Mindszenty to Eisenhower, May 4, 1957. DDELib, AWF; International Series; Box 26.

food to the people of Budapest; in helping 170,000 Hungarian refugees to find new homes; in persuading many Asian and African countries for the first time to vote to condemn the Soviet Union; and in dealing a body-blow to communism all over the world.⁵⁸⁸

In my view, however, Lodge missed the point, because the interests of the United States (not to mention the stated goals of the Eisenhower Administration) required that the Hungarian Revolution be victorious and that Soviet forces not intervene. The gains which accrued to the US national interest by post facto American and United Nations humanitarian steps were insignificant compared to the gains which Khrushchev was able to register for the USSR by crushing the uprising in Hungary and putting a lid on dissent in Eastern Europe that would last for over a decade. Yet for Lodge to have declared that during the Hungarian crisis the Administration "took every step short of war" and "left no stone unturned"⁵⁸⁹ was little short of reprehensible.

Even while adopting a thoroughly passive and unimaginative position regarding Hungary in the UN and in Washington, the Administration was taking an unexpectedly tough stance against Britain, France, and Israel. From the very first indication that a Western military operation was underway in Egypt, the leading officials of the Administration seemed to have made a restoration of the status quo ante in the Middle East their top priority. The need to prevent Soviet military intervention in Hungary was now all but forgotten, the matter already having been adequately

588. Letter, Lodge to Henry R. Luce, March 4, 1957, p. 5. DDELlib; C. D. Jackson Papers; Box 56.

589. Ibid., p. 6.

handled in any case, from Eisenhower's perspective, by the various US pledges of non-involvement. Although John Foster Dulles was correct to remark to the President that it was a "great tragedy" that the British and French had chosen this time to attack Egypt, since Europe's attention should more properly have remained focused on Hungary, and although he was also correct to discern that "Soviet policy [in Eastern Europe] is collapsing" (though the Administration was uniformly indisposed to exploit this fact), he drew a highly dubious conclusion in stating that "the Br[itish] and Fr[ench] are doing the same thing in the Arab world" as the Russians were in Hungary.⁵⁹⁰ Nor was there any need for Eisenhower to have added that the US had to be careful that "we don't get in the position [in Egypt that] the Soviets are in Hungary."⁵⁹¹ This idealistic, overrated, and self-defeating assumption on the part of the President and the Secretary of State - that the Soviet occupation of Hungary and the Franco-British action in Suez were equally objectionable - became the basis for hard-hitting US sanctions against its two principal NATO Allies: in addition to the pressure being applied daily by the American delegation at the United Nations (highlighted by the unfortunate spectacle of American and Soviet diplomats cooperating in lining up support for votes in the General Assembly), the United States' massive economic and financial leverage was now also brought to bear against London

590. "Telephone Call From the President," October 30, 1956, 4:54 PM. DDELib, JFD Papers; Phone Call Series; Box 11.

591. Ibid.

and Paris. In a decision with important implications for future Middle East crises, Eisenhower decided not to permit US petroleum to be diverted to Britain in the event that the cutoff of Middle East oil left British reserves depleted, while at the same time American representatives at the International Monetary Fund were directed to obstruct all IMF efforts to prop up the Pound, which was losing value in world markets at a rapid pace.⁵⁹² These tangible and weighty steps, which marred British-American relations for several years, were not matched by any similar threats or sanctions against the Soviet leadership. On the contrary, even while boycotting Communist diplomatic receptions in the wake of Khrushchev's brutal suppression of the Hungarian Revolution, the Eisenhower Administration was doing its best to reach out to the Soviet leadership and try to establish a new round of arms control negotiations. In January 1957 Ambassador Lodge was instructed to offer a new American package of disarmament proposals which, it was hoped, might encourage Khrushchev to do the same, while Harold Stassen argued that the US should accommodate the Soviet preference for "informal Soviet-American negotiations rather than within the United Nations."⁵⁹³

592. Robert R. Bowie, Suez 1956 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 75-76. It was small consolation to London when Eisenhower promised British Prime Minister Anthony Eden a loan of one billion Dollars immediately upon a British withdrawal from Suez.

593. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Waging Peace, p. 472. The President was frustrated when it became apparent that the Soviet leadership did not share his interest in arms talks, but later recalled with pride, "we did not give up." Ibid., p. 474.

Similarly, on November 11, only one week after the Soviet intervention in Hungary, Eisenhower sent a letter to Tito reiterating his earlier invitation to the Yugoslav leader to come visit the United States, despite the fact that Tito had been informed in advance that Soviet forces were about to depose the Hungarian government but chose not to make the information known to Imre Nagy.⁵⁹⁴ Given the Eisenhower Administration's relatively kid-glove treatment of the Soviet leadership throughout the double crisis, in contrast to its harsh (and effective) policies against the British, French, and Israelis, it took more than just a little chutzpah for one of the Administration's leading figures to conclude in Eisenhower's recriminatory post-mortem on November 8 that "we should ... give the Congressional leaders a good stiff talk on Hungary" because "there has been too great a tendency [in Congress] to allow developments in the Near East to divert attention from Hungary."⁵⁹⁵

594. Nor was the US invitation retracted when Nagy was arrested by the KGB immediately upon his release from the Yugoslav Embassy in Budapest; Eisenhower accepted Belgrade's insistence that no Soviet-Yugoslav collusion was involved. The President's letter and Tito's response are available in DDELib, AWF; International Series; Box 50.

595. Memorandum of Discussion of the 303rd Meeting of the NSC, November 8, 1956, p. 16. DDELib, AWF; NSC Series; Box 8. My italics. The remarks are Vice President Nixon's. The charge was nonsense, because Congress, as it is wont to do in a crisis, was only following the President's lead.

I might add that in looking at the memoirs of Administration officials and the documentation of White House and State Department meetings at the time, it is striking how much more time officials spent in reviewing the events in Sinai and Suez and in considering possible American reactions there than in analyzing developments and

At the same time, there were disingenuous protests within Administration circles (and in the years since then by various apologists for Eisenhower) that the Anglo-French operation in Suez had ruined the Western Alliance's ability to keep the Soviet leadership from crushing the Hungarian Revolution, as if in the absence of a crisis in Egypt the United States would somehow have acted differently with respect to Hungary. Eisenhower allowed himself to speculate about how British and French troops in Europe might otherwise have been able to join up with "an expedition combining West German or Italian forces with our own,"⁵⁹⁶ while Foster Dulles haughtily lamented on November 1 how "at this very time, when we are on the point of winning an immense and long-hoped-for victory over Soviet colonialism in Eastern Europe," the US would have to turn aside and oppose the British and French.⁵⁹⁷ Just how, one is left to wonder, was the United States "on the point of winning ... victory" in Eastern Europe if the Administration's entire policy toward the Hungarian Revolution had thus far been one only of declared non-involvement? Did Dulles expect Khrushchev to evacuate Hungary out of generosity, or out of awe for America's noble pledge of restraint? Whatever the Secretary's fantasies, London and Paris

options in Hungary. It is clear that Suez was Eisenhower's priority, and in this I feel his emphasis was greatly misplaced.

596. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Waging Peace, p. 88. The President quickly labeled the idea "out of the question."

597. Ibid., p. 83. My italics.

were now blamed as the culprits, despite the fact that no one was forcing Eisenhower's hand or predetermining American policy. There was no reason why the Administration could not have made Hungary its priority and have delayed whatever measures it was considering taking against the British and French until after Soviet acceptance of the Revolution in Budapest had been secured.

Instead, however, Eisenhower and his advisors preferred to stand on principle. Speaking in Philadelphia on November 1, the President explained that the United States could not possibly "subscribe to one law for the weak, [and] another for the strong,"⁵⁹⁸ meaning that since the US was calling upon the Soviet leadership (even if timidly) to abide by its own statement of October 30 and come to terms with the Nagy regime, then the Administration was obliged to oppose the British, French, and Israeli operation in Egypt. But this lofty position obscured the fact that there was no guarantee at all that the tentative, if not capitulationist, steps which Eisenhower was pursuing would help ensure that the Hungarian Revolution would succeed, whereas it was almost certain that strong American pressure would cause the British and French to abandon their efforts in Suez. Moreover, a falling out among the ranks in the Western alliance (for which London and Paris of course deserved much of the blame) could only encourage Khrushchev and his associates in the Kremlin to take greater chances in Hungary. Yet if, despite the risks involved for the Hungarian position, Eisenhower was still

598. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Waging Peace, p. 83.

determined to achieve an immediate and humiliating Franco-British withdrawal from Egypt, it would not have cost him anything to have first tried to link a Western pullout from Suez with a Soviet pledge to evacuate Hungary, revise the Warsaw Treaty, or otherwise abide by the wishes of the Hungarians. Considering that Soviet and American officials at the UN were already in contact with each other on the question of Suez, it would not have been difficult to arrange more wide-ranging US-Soviet negotiations on the issue, in which American support for the Soviet position on the Middle East could have been tied to Soviet restraint in Hungary.⁵⁹⁹ The sad fact remains, though, that no such course was attempted.

The Administration's failure to try to restrain the Soviet leadership in the short period between November 1 and November 4, during which the massing of Soviet troops and military hardware around Hungary was perfectly evident, is all the more remarkable when one recalls that on November 1 the Nagy government formally asked the United States for help. Imre Nagy's unprecedented statement that "the Hungarian Government ... repudiates the Warsaw Treaty ... declares Hungary's neutrality and ... requests the help of the four great powers in defending the country's neutrality" should have been sufficiently dramatic and unprecedented to have captured the imagination of even the

599. This was the scenario which George Heltai and others in Nagy's entourage seem to have expected. As Heltai told the author, "It was simply unimaginable to me that the United States would oppose its own allies in Egypt but fail to oppose the Soviet Union in Hungary." Appendix F.

Eisenhower Administration. Instead hardly an eyebrow was raised. In the Legation in Budapest, where the Hungarian declaration was received in the form of a diplomatic note later the same day, Tom Rogers carefully went over the declaration with the Chargé, Spencer Barnes. They decided that in the circumstances, with State already aware of the Legation's viewpoint and with the new Minister, Edward Wailes, due to arrive in Budapest the next day, it was more important for the cable to arrive quickly in Washington than for the Legation to add its comments; accordingly, they passed it on to Washington without any recommendation and awaited further instructions.⁶⁰⁰ Imre Nagy's foreign policy advisors, on the other hand, were left with the impression that the US would be favorably disposed toward Nagy's request: Pétér Mád, the Hungarian emissary to the Western diplomatic Missions, reported back to Heltai that his meeting with the Americans had gone very well.⁶⁰¹ During the next two days, however, the Hungarians made no effort to follow up their initial approach. This was quite unfortunate, because the American and other Western representatives in Budapest do not seem to have realized the extent of the desperation with which Nagy was turning to them. Although Nagy had declared Hungary

600. See Tom Rogers' interview with the author, Appendix O. The text of the Hungarian note was received in Washington at 2:05 PM on November 1. USBudapest 208, November 1, 1956. Archives 661.64/11-156.

601. Mád said that the Americans had promised to cable Washington immediately, but both he and Heltai read more in to that reply than was probably justified. See Heltai's interview, Appendix F.

neutral on November 1 out of a recognition that a Soviet attack was imminent, neither the US Legation in Budapest nor the State Department in Washington appreciated how imperative it was that they address Nagy's request quickly. For their part, Imre Nagy and his advisors once again relied too readily on overly optimistic assumptions of American perspicacity and interest.

When Wailes arrived in Budapest as expected on November 2, he was at as much of a loss as his colleagues in the Legation as to what exactly Imre Nagy wanted the United States to do. Nevertheless, neither he or any of the others in the Legation tried to go back to Nagy in order to obtain elaboration from the Hungarians on just how the United States was to help - or simply in order to exchange views on the crisis. Such lack of initiative at this important stage (and in the wake of the Legation's fine reporting and bold suggestions during the difficult previous week) seems hard to condone, particularly considering that the Legation had recommended only the day before that discussions (albeit economic) "can be begun with [the] provisional Government of Hungary within [a] short time."⁶⁰² But now, when assertiveness and imagination, not ponderous foot-dragging, was required from the American diplomats in Hungary, Wailes took no steps whatsoever to seek out the Hungarians, although there is probably merit to Rogers' reminder that the Legation staff "assumed that there was much more deliberation

602. USBudapest 210, November 1, 1956. Archives 764.00/11-156.

going on in Washington than there really was."⁶⁰³ Yet not only was there in truth very little going on in Washington, but in sending Wailes to Budapest empty-handed, the Administration had blithely passed up its best opportunity to give Nagy an authoritative high-level message without fear of transmission difficulties or hostile interception. In fact, the State Department was so misguided or indifferent that Wailes was directed not even to present his credentials to the Nagy government.⁶⁰⁴ This was consistent with a recommendation by Ambassador Thompson (very highly regarded by his superiors at State), who cabled Washington from Vienna on October 31 with the gratuitous warning that if Wailes went ahead and presented his credentials, that action might be "exploited as endorsement by the United States of the present [Nagy] government."⁶⁰⁵ The recommendation was as unnecessarily cautious as Thompson's many other steps during the crisis, but in this case Thompson was being not only spineless but impractical as well. The President and the Secretary of State had signaled in every way they could think of that the US was not going to get involved in Hungary, and now one of the country's most experienced Ambassadors was insisting, in the midst of the first major challenge to Soviet

603. Appendix O. This was the reason why the Legation had not seen a need to comment on the Hungarian note when it was first relayed to Washington.

604. State 1259 to Vienna, November 2, 1956. Archives 764.00/10-3156.

605. USVienna 1022, October 31, 1956. Archives 764.00/10-3156. See also Márton, "Why Has the West Slept?" p. 28.

hegemony over Eastern Europe since World War II, that the United States avoid any contact whatsoever with the Hungarian government until a regime more to American liking somehow should rise to power.⁶⁰⁶

Keeping in mind that Thompson's insistence that the United States not endorse the Nagy regime was made after the Soviet leadership had (apparently) already acknowledged the Hungarian Revolution to be legitimate, it is extremely hard to see how the Eisenhower Administration by that point could seriously still have considered American discussions with Nagy to have been inappropriate. Either a Soviet invasion of Hungary had already been decided upon and was now imminent, in which case US-Hungarian talks could hardly be provocative, or there was still a chance that the Soviet leadership could yet be deterred from intervening, in which case Eisenhower could only have helped the Hungarians if he had heeded Nagy's request for support of Hungary's declared neutrality. Whichever the case - and even if one were to assume that the leading officials in the

606. In another example of needlessly bending over backwards, Thompson prohibited any Embassy personnel from getting near the Austrian border with Hungary. Or, as Thompson reported to Washington:

I have given strict instructions [that] all American agencies here refrain from any activities which might afford [the] Soviets [the] excuse to charge [that the] Revolution [is] being directed from Austria by [the] U.S.

USVienna 959, October 29, 1956. Archives 764.00/10-2956. See also William Stearman's interview with the author, Appendix P, and John Mapother's interview, Appendix L. Both were stationed in the Vienna Embassy at the time.

Administration had no way to know what Khrushchev's intentions actually were (which was not true) - the US seemingly had nothing to lose by acting vigorously to support the Hungarian Declaration of November 1, or at the least by entering into discussions with Nagy. But since Wailes was ordered not to present his credentials, is it really any wonder that the Legation in Budapest was so reluctant to pursue formal talks with Nagy in the absence of explicit authorization from Washington to do so?⁶⁰⁷

As in the tentative American policy throughout the earlier stages of the Hungarian crisis, responsibility for the failure to act upon Imre Nagy's plea for help on November 1 falls squarely upon President Eisenhower and his top advisors. When Nagy's dramatic declaration was received in the White House, Allen Dulles exulted that "The occurrences in Hungary are ... a miracle. They have disproved that a popular revolt can't occur in the face of modern weapons."⁶⁰⁸ However, instead of concentrating on how the United States might now best lend the Hungarian revolutionaries diplomatic support, as Nagy had requested, the leading figures of the Administration instead reminded each other that (by the unfair standards by which the

607. On November 3, the State Department reversed itself and instructed Wailes to present his credentials, but he was unable to do so prior to the Soviet attack and the installation of the Kádár regime. State Department Memorandum, "Recognition of New Hungarian Government," November 12, 1956. Archives 764.00/11-1256.

608. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Waging Peace, p. 82. Dulles was right: given the Administration's sworn non-involvement, it was a miracle that the Hungarians had accomplished as much as they had.

Hungarians were being judged) the regime in Budapest still lacked sufficient credibility to qualify for full American backing: there was a "lack of strong guiding authority for the rebels" (did the use of the term "rebels" imply that Gerö's regime was considered the legitimate one?), "Imre Nagy was failing," "the rebels were demanding that he resign," and it was "Cardinal Mindszenty, [who] if supported by the Roman Catholic ardor of the Hungarian people, was a possible leader."⁶⁰⁹ Incredibly, then, only hours after the leader of a pro-American nation, located on some of the most strategic territory in Eastern Europe, had officially ordered that all Soviet troops evacuate his country and had simultaneously requested United States support in achieving that objective, the Eisenhower Administration dismissed that same leader as a failing and incompetent despot who would do best to resign in favor of a compromised and inexperienced Horthyite prelate. This was hardly the way to pursue American national interests. Then, as was mentioned, the President inexplicably informed his National Security Council that he did not even wish "to take up the situation in the Soviet satellites." For Eisenhower, the Hungarian declaration of neutrality had not changed one iota the assessment which he had made at the outset of the crisis that because the NATO countries did not share any land borders with Hungary, the United States would be unable to support the Hungarian revolutionaries in any

609. Ibid.

effective way. As the President wrote in a letter to one of his confidants two weeks after the Soviet invasion:

I assure you that the measures taken there [in Hungary] by the Soviets are just as distressing to me as they are to you. But to annihilate Hungary, should it become the scene of a bitter conflict, is in no way to help her. At the same time, if the United Nations is to work, Mr. Hammarskjöld must act as he, and the United Nations, see fit.⁶¹⁰

Once again it was acquiescence, pure and simple: acquiescence in whatever the Soviet leadership hatched up, acquiescence in whatever Tito and the other East European Communists agreed to go along with, and acquiescence in whatever Hammarskjöld decided to do. Seemingly the only regimes in this whole sorry episode to have been restrained by American decisions were those in Budapest, Jerusalem, London, and Paris. Moreover, Henry Cabot Lodge's assertion that American policy in the UN during the Hungarian Revolution had somehow dealt "a body-blow to communism all over the world" was the worst type of wishful thinking. Much closer to the truth was Robert Murphy's later recognition that because "the element of fear plays an important role in international affairs," the effect of the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian Revolution was to increase significantly many governments' "subsequent willingness to yield to Soviet influence..."⁶¹¹ Murphy's sad conclusion is just as insightful:

Perhaps history will demonstrate that the free world could have intervened to give the Hungarians the liberty they sought, but none of us in the State

610. Letter, Eisenhower to C. D. Jackson, November 19, 1956. DDELib; C. D. Jackson Papers; Box 41.

611. Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors, p. 481.

Department had the skill or the imagination to devise a way.⁶¹²

Substitute the words "Eisenhower Administration" for "State Department," and add "or, to be honest, the interest" after "imagination," and one will have an assessment of American policy toward the Hungarian Revolution which comes close to the mark.

Myths and Allegations

In the years since 1956, suspicions from time to time have been put forward that perhaps the United States was not as uninvolved in the Hungarian Revolution as appeared to be the case by American public statements and diplomatic inaction. Communist propaganda consistently has charged that the "counter-revolution" in Hungary was the result of Western intrigue, while various observers in the United States have occasionally speculated that maybe the Eisenhower administration did play a clandestine behind-the-scenes role. Of course, it was not widely known in 1956 that the CIA was secretly training East European émigrés near Munich at the time, but the fact of earlier CIA activities, such as in Albania, has since led some people to suspect that similar operations might have been conducted elsewhere, including Hungary. In recent years there have been a number of accusations that despite US government claims to the contrary, émigrés trained by the United States in West Germany were in fact smuggled into Hungary and other East European countries just

612. Ibid.

before the Revolution in Hungary broke out. William Corson, for one, is quite explicit:

In the several months between Poznan [June 28] and Gomulka's election [October 18], the CIA pushed ahead with plans for uprisings in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Rumania, in that order. Red Sox/Red Cap groups, like latter-day Trojan Horse forces, were inserted into those nations' capitals and plans were made for the "freedom fighters" to throw off the evil yoke of communism.⁶¹³

In the same vein, another account maintains that "Members of a special CIA-trained army force, foreign-born nationals, stationed in Germany, were sent into Hungary to help the revolutionaries."⁶¹⁴ A third author writes that "The CIA sent RED SOX/RED CAP groups in Budapest into action to join the Freedom Fighters and help organize them,"⁶¹⁵ while yet a fourth claims that German intelligence chief Reinhard Gehlen worked with the CIA to smuggle operatives into Hungary:

A large team of his [Gehlen's] Hungarian agents and officers who lived in exile in Germany and had been trained in emigré camps near Munich reached Budapest on the eve of the fighting. [Allen] Dulles contributed a well-armed shock unit from CIA's "private army" in Germany.⁶¹⁶

613. Corson, The Armies of Ignorance, p. 369.

614. Steven, Operation Splinter Factor, p. 216.

615. Ambrose, Ike's Spies, p. 238.

616. E. H. Cookridge, Gehlen: Spy of the Century (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971), p. 305. As with most of these accounts, Cookridge's allegations are not well documented or reliable. Cookridge claims, for instance, without identifying his source, that one of Gehlen's Hungarian officers, General Paul Zako, thwarted an attempt on Tito's life in 1951 by bribing the would-be assassin, while in Austria, to defect to the West. In return for this and other favors, Tito was supposedly so grateful that he made available a copy of Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" in 1956.

However, the accuracy of each of these accounts is brought into serious question by the fact that neither Corson, Steven, Ambrose, nor Cookridge give any citations in support of their bold claims, although all four accounts claim in general to be based on unidentified "intelligence sources."

Based on more credible sources, there is good reason to believe that the CIA never went ahead with its plans to infiltrate Red Sox/Red Cap agents into Hungary. De Silva, for example, who was the CIA's Station Chief in Vienna and responsible for CIA operations in Hungary, insists that CIA activities in Hungary during the Revolution consisted only of intelligence gathering and not covert operations.⁶¹⁷ John Mapother, one of De Silva's subordinates, adds that by 1956, if not earlier, most of the CIA's cross-border covert operations into Eastern Europe had already been terminated.⁶¹⁸ Because most of the CIA's intelligence gathering operations in Hungary, as

Yet Bob Amory, who traveled to Belgrade in 1956 in his capacity as Deputy Director of the CIA specifically to request such a copy, reports that Tito was uncooperative. See Appendix A.

617. De Silva's account strongly implies that there was no CIA station in Hungary or indeed in any of the other Soviet satellites in this period. Similarly, according to Giza Katona, the Deputy Political Officer in the American Legation in Budapest during the Revolution, there was no special "Research Section" (the euphemism frequently used to allude to CIA stations) in the Legation, unlike in the larger US Embassies. Katona, letter to the author. De Silva also claims that until 1953 there was not a single CIA intelligence officer working in the Embassy in Moscow. De Silva, Sub Rosa, The CIA and the Uses of Intelligence, p. 71.

618. For Mapother's interview with the author, see Appendix L.

well as covert operations, were run out of Vienna or Germany, De Silva and Mapother were in a position to know the truth.⁶¹⁹ De Silva's authoritative disclaimer regarding 1956 is straightforward: "There was no intelligence impetus given to the Revolution; it was spontaneous in every respect, although clearly the Hungarians hoped for U.S. help."⁶²⁰

What De Silva might have added was that many officials in Washington in turn very much hoped to be able to help. Frank Wisner, the CIA's Deputy Director for Plans (that is, Operations), is reported to have urged Allen Dulles to give him the go-ahead to send Red Sox/Red Cap forces into Hungary, but was refused permission to do so.⁶²¹ Wisner then argued, according to Leonard Mosley, that the United States at least should do something to help the Hungarians who were already engaged in fighting the Russians:

Wisner eloquently argued that they must be given aid and given it urgently. He asked for an airlift to provide them with immediate supplies of arms and trained reinforcements. . . . "We must act now," he kept

619. Whenever personnel of the US Legation in Budapest were in Vienna, they were required to be debriefed by De Silva's "Research Section." Occasionally they would be asked to be on the lookout for certain information upon their return to Hungary. Katona, letter to the author.

620. De Silva, Sub Rosa, The CIA and the Uses of Intelligence, p. 122.

621. Mosley, Dulles, pp. 419-420. Mosley, whose standards of research and analysis must be called into question, bases his depiction of the Wisner-Dulles encounter on "the versions of several senior member of the Agency who were present." I am including Mosley's account here because I feel an examination of American policy toward the Revolution would not be complete without a look at the allegations, even if predominantly unfounded, of CIA involvement.

saying, "How can they fight back at the Soviet tanks with rifles and machine guns? We must give them anti-tank weapons and expert cadres to lead them. Now now now. It must be done now, before it's too late!" ... Wisner dragged back the old fighting words from the early days of Foster Dulles's tenure at State: "What about 'liberation' and 'rollback'? And, in any case, since the United States is now taking a stand against her allies at Suez, have we not recovered the moral right to take a stand against our enemies and come to the aid of the Hungarians in their fight with the Russians?"

Allen [Dulles] tried to explain that it just wasn't in the cards. ... action was dangerous. It could rebound in the voting booths, and was to be strictly eschewed.⁶²²

Others at CIA shared Wisner's feelings, though unlike Wisner, few officials were in a position to carry out any covert operations. Between the end of October and November 4 there were calls from CIA officials for various types of action, many of them unrealistic - transporting fighters from Germany across the Austro-Hungarian frontier, or parachuting the US Army into Hungary. All the suggestions were rejected, either on political grounds or because there was "nothing in the cupboard" in Europe. After all, with the exception of the relatively small Red Sox/Red Cap program, there were simply no "Special Forces" or Airborne Division-type forces available. More importantly, the President had already decided that he would not permit the United States to support the Hungarians in any tangible fashion, for fear of the "extreme measures" with which the Soviet leadership might react. The President's top officials shared that view, as Bob Amory discovered when he recommended an ultimatum to Khrushchev. Eisenhower did not view clandestine operations in Eastern Europe

622. Ibid., p. 420.

any more favorably than other forms of American intervention, and he had used the Solarium Project to close down the Albanian operation for precisely this reason.

Following his unsatisfactory discussions with Allen Dulles, Wisner flew to Vienna, where he presumably met with De Silva. Wisner was reported to have been contacted there by many of the émigrés who had been trained by the CIA to go into Hungary in just such a situation, and he was supposedly also asked for permission to retrieve the "caches of sterilized arms" which were waiting for the Red Sox/Red Cap forces.⁶²³ But he could not give anyone the green light and could only watch helplessly when Soviet forces began to crush the Revolution on November 4.⁶²⁴ Following the Soviet invasion, Wisner took the defeat of the Hungarians as a personal blow. His bitterness over being unable to take any covert steps in support of the freedom fighters in Hungary led to spells of depression and illness. Eventually Wisner committed suicide.⁶²⁵

Further confirmation that Red Sox/Red Cap agents were not sent into Hungary during the Revolution comes from a biography of the US Ambassador to Italy in 1956, Clare Boothe Luce. On October 29, according to this account, a CIA agent who had been

623. Powers, The Man Who Kept the Secrets, pp. 93-94. Powers bases this claim on the account of Wisner's top aide on the trip, John Baker.

624. According to Mapother (Appendix L), Wisner was in Vienna primarily to deal with matters unrelated to clandestine operations, but I find this explanation a bit too innocent.

625. Mosley, Dulles, pp. 436-438; Powers, The Man Who Kept the Secrets, p. 97.

stationed in Hungary (presumably operating out of Vienna), and who had been present when the Revolution broke out, appeared at the Embassy in Rome, looking very distraught and "drinking himself into oblivion." He reportedly told Ambassador Luce that he had been led to expect that once the Hungarians' will to resist had been demonstrated, the United States would provide the Hungarians with tangible support, specifically "small arms, bazookas, and antitank guns."⁶²⁶ Luce was infuriated by the news, and immediately sent Washington a "frantic" cable urging that something be done to assist the Hungarians.⁶²⁷

Nevertheless, the most significant indication that no CIA agents played a role in sparking or affecting the Revolution, is the fact that (to their knowledge) none of the Hungarians who participated in the uprising received any help from outside the country or from returning émigrés. Endre Márton speculated that

626. Stephen Shadegg, Clare Boothe Luce: A Biography (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976), p. 270.

627. Ibid. I have been unable to obtain a copy of this cable. A few days later, however, when the Soviet forces had already begun to suppress the Revolution, Luce sent an "Eyes only" message to the President which for some reason was relayed through the American Embassy in France:

Mr. President, Franco British action on Suez is a small wound to their prestige but American inaction about Hungary could be a fatal wound to ours. Let us not (rpt not) ask for whom the bell tolls in Hungary today. It tolls for us if freedom's holy light is extinguished in blood and iron there.

USParis 2171, November 4, 1956. Archives 764.00/11-456. Luce's parentheses. There is no reason to believe that Eisenhower was at all swayed by this plea, which in any case does not seem to have been received in Washington until after the Soviet invasion.

there "might have been clandestine infiltrations of various Hungarian organizations," but pointed out that if so, neither he nor anyone he had spoken with was aware of it. Moreover, he saw no indication whatsoever that there were Western agents out in the streets funneling weapons or supplies to the freedom fighters.⁶²⁸ In George Heltai's view, not only was there no CIA support of the Revolution, there was also no effort on the part of the West to gather intelligence on what Nagy and his supporters hoped to achieve. Later, Heltai was told by American officials who had been involved in East European affairs that there was really very little that the CIA could have done.⁶²⁹

All of this is a reminder that covert operations in support of anti-Soviet movements in Eastern Europe can be effective only if top American leaders are prepared to shift to an overt policy in support of those same movements, should the covert side succeed in helping trigger or nourish a popular revolution. In the case of Hungary in 1956, there is no evidence that the CIA in fact played any role at all in creating or assisting the Revolution, but what is important to underline is that the Hungarian Revolution was exactly the sort of uprising which

628. Interview with the author, Appendix M. In the Bakmeteff Archives of Columbia University, I examined many of the interviews which were conducted between 1957 and 1959 with Hungarian refugees who had come to the United States following the Revolution. In those archives I did not find a single reference by any of the refugees (most of whom had claimed to have taken part to some extent or another in the fighting) that alluded to any military, organizational, or other assistance from Westerners or Hungarian émigrés to the freedom fighters.

629. Heltai's interview with the author, Appendix F.

previous clandestine American programs had sought to expedite, and which an ongoing paramilitary operation (though still only in the agent-training stages), Operation Red Sox/Red Cap, was still seeking to achieve. As I have tried to argue, however, when the Hungarian Revolution exploded in October 1956 and forced Ernő Gerő out of power, not only was there no clandestine American reaction, but more to the point, there was no effective American political or diplomatic response whatsoever.

Another allegation which began to appear in the aftermath of the Revolution was that Radio Free Europe's broadcasts and the other steps taken by the Free Europe Committee had wrongly led many Hungarians to believe that if they were to rise up against Rákosi or Gerő then the United States would come to their aid. Senator Estes Kefauver, for example, charged that the leaflets still being dropped over Hungary as late as October 1956 gave Hungarians the wrong impression of American policy:

Taken individually, these statements might be dismissed as immoral but harmless political propaganda. But the cumulative effect, falling on hopeful ears abroad, could very well [have led] to the false hope that the United States was ready and willing to do what it was not prepared to do.⁶³⁰

In some cases even leading figures of the Administration seemed to share this view. Vice President Nixon later wrote how, during his visit to the Austro-Hungarian border a few weeks after the suppression of the Revolution, he was told by Hungarian refugees that RFE had helped instigate the uprising:

630. The New York Times, December 30, 1956. Cited in Kovrig, The Myth of Liberation, p. 213.

"Do you feel that the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe played a part in encouraging the revolution?" I asked [a group of Hungarians who had just escaped across the border]. Looks of surprise came over their faces as my deliberately undiplomatic question was translated. One of them blurted out the answer - "Yes."⁶³¹

Based on these and other impressions at the time, Nixon concluded that it was "irresponsible" for the United States "to urge them [East Europeans] to armed rebellion, raising their hopes and encouraging them to risk their lives without any prospect of assistance from us."⁶³² Because of this perception, which became widespread in the United States within a short time of the Revolution - perhaps due to the guilt which many Americans felt over the country's failure to have come to Hungary's aid - Radio Free Europe was directed to conduct a review of its broadcasting policy. Paul Henze, who headed up the evaluation, told the author that the study showed, for the most part, that RFE's programs during the uprising did not suggest that the station's listeners should take up arms or in some other way indicate the existence of a greater American preparedness to come to the Hungarians' assistance than in fact was the case:

We were able to conclude that very few of our broadcasts were agitational. One of the few which was agitational, as I recall, was a piece by our military commentator, a former Hungarian colonel, in which he gave recipes for Molotov cocktails. But that sort of thing was very rare. Still, the Hungarian Revolution was quite a traumatic experience for Radio Free Europe.⁶³³

631. Nixon, RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon, p. 225.

632. Ibid., p. 226.

633. See Appendix G.

The contents of Radio Free Europe's post-mortem study (now available at the Eisenhower Library in Abilene, Kansas) for the most part support Henze's claim that RFE's broadcasts had not been agitational. It seems that from the outset of the Revolution, Radio Free Europe was led to believe, and reflected this belief in its broadcasts, that Imre Nagy was responsible, at least in part, if not principally, for the role played by Soviet troops in the first round of violence, October 23-24. RFE's written guidance to its constituent broadcast services of October 24 included the statement that

The total [popular] participation in the Hungarian events, paralleling that in Poznan, shows the irresistible desire of the captive peoples for real meaning and for a decent way of life. ... That Nagy called upon foreign troops to restore "order" is a fact that he will have to live down.⁶³⁴

This misperception was not corrected in RFE's broadcasts during the days that followed, and as late as October 29, RFE's guidance was still stressing that broadcasters should publicize the misdirected Hungarian demand for a "new ... government ... which does not include any compromised Communists."⁶³⁵ In Washington, where the Administration was influenced to a great degree by RFE's intelligence reports throughout the crisis, American policy never quite shook off the initial view that Nagy had been working with the Russians. RFE's internal guidance also directed that

634. "Radio Free Europe Report on Hungary," undated, pp. 16-17. DDELlib, C.D. Jackson Papers; Box 44. My italics. The instructions for Soviet troops in Hungary to intervene on the night of October 23/24 in fact probably originated with Gerő and Andropov.

635. Ibid., p. 18. RFE's italics.

ample air time should be given to the freedom fighters' far-reaching demands for "immediate and total withdrawal of all Soviet troops from Hungarian soil" and "immediate establishment of full political freedoms prior to free and secret elections."⁶³⁶ Regarding this point, RFE's defenders point out that the station was only broadcasting back into Hungary statements which the freedom fighters themselves were making, but RFE's own guidance at the time was stressing that Radio Free Europe should give greatest publicity to those positions "with which RFE wholly identifies itself."⁶³⁷ Giving prominent air time to the demands for Soviet troop withdrawal and free elections was greatly misleading, because RFE was widely regarded in Hungary to be a mouthpiece for the Administration, and it was apparent that Eisenhower was making no effort either to expedite a Soviet pullout or to call for Hungarian elections. Still, one cannot blame Radio Free Europe for the fact that its broadcasts did not jibe with Administration policy. Officials at RFE, after all, had every reason to believe that the Administration would try to echo the freedom fighters' demands, if only because Foster Dulles and others had been calling for the liberation of Eastern Europe for several years and encouraging the directors of the Free Europe Committee in their efforts to further exactly such an

636. Ibid.

637. Ibid. On November 2, RFE's internal guidance was reformulated in an effort to adopt a more neutral position. It was now claimed that "RFE's place is [only] to help them [the Hungarians] implement their desires and plans by publicizing and reiterating them." Ibid., p. 19.

outcome. Moreover, RFE guidance was often careful to stress that its broadcasters should urge the freedom fighters to use "disciplined self-restraint" (October 31, November 2) and went out of its way to praise the Administration's various pledges of reassurance that "the US has no ulterior purpose in desiring the independence of the satellite countries" and does not see Poland and Hungary as "potential military allies" - hardly inflammatory rhetoric.⁶³⁸ Of course, RFE's broadcasters occasionally ignored the guidance which they were supposed to follow, as when Béla Király was seemingly called by name to "lead the Hungarians to victory."⁶³⁹

On the whole, then, Radio Free Europe's conclusion that its broadcasts were not by themselves agitational seems to have been accurate, although taken as a whole the RFE broadcasts gave an impression of American policy which was misleading. This assessment was echoed by an inquiry conducted soon after the Revolution by the government of West Germany, on whose territory RFE was operating. The Germans decided that of the station's 308 programs during the Revolution, only four were "in clear violation of RFE's standing policies or daily guidances on the Hungarian revolt," while sixteen more were found to contain

638. Ibid., pp. 21-23. Radio Free Europe broadcast that the pledges of non-involvement "have immense significance and represent a potentially decisive American contribution to the fight for freedom," an assessment with which the Hungarian audience might well have disagreed. Despite the claims of RFE's critics, this stance alone suggests that RFE was taking as aloof an approach toward the Revolution as were the Administration's policy makers in Washington.

639. See Király's interview with the author, Appendix I.

"distortions," and a few others (such as the case of the Hungarian colonel whom Henze mentioned) contained military advice to the revolutionaries.⁶⁴⁰ In my view, however, if the Hungarians had been led to believe that the United States would do more to support their efforts to oust the Soviet occupiers, it was primarily because the Eisenhower Administration had been openly declaring for several years its desire to see democracy prevail in Eastern Europe and only secondarily because Radio Free Europe was zealous in publicizing the revolutionaries' maximal demands.

A third allegation made with respect to the Eisenhower Administration's policy toward the Revolution in Hungary sounds much more credible. In August 1960, Michael Feighan, a Democratic Congressman from Ohio, charged that on November 2, 1956, only two days before the Soviet invasion of Hungary, the State Department cabled the Embassy in Belgrade with instructions to inform Tito that the United States recognized the legitimacy of the Communist governments of Eastern Europe. The following was alleged to be the message to Tito:

The Government of the United States does not look with favor upon governments unfriendly to the Soviet Union on the border of the Soviet Union.⁶⁴¹

Feighan was not able to produce the cable, however, and in the years since then a number of efforts to do so (including my own) have come to naught. Nevertheless, Feighan stuck by his claim

640. Kovrig, The Myth of Liberation, p. 214.

641. Cited in John A. Stormer, None Dare Call It Treason (Florissant, MO: Liberty Bell Press, 1964), p. 48.

that such a message was in fact transmitted on November 2, and his allegation may be found in the Congressional Record of August 31, 1960.⁶⁴² In my view, there is a very strong likelihood that Feighan's charge was essentially true, although the text which he cited may have been based more on sympathetic second-hand sources in the State Department than on a first-hand look at the document itself. Given the Eisenhower Administration's efforts throughout the Hungarian crisis to reassure the Soviet leadership that the United States had no intention of playing any role in Hungary, a diplomatic communication of the type which Feighan alleged was issued in 1956 would have been only one more step in the same misguided policy. And considering that even well after the Hungarian Revolution had been crushed, Eisenhower's top lieutenants still felt a need to remind Moscow of America's hands-off policy - as Foster Dulles did by telling Gromyko in October 1957 that "We believe the Soviet Union ought to have friendly nations and friendly governments along its borders"⁶⁴³ - it does not seem too hard to believe that at the last minute of the Hungarian Revolution the Administration would launch one more pathetic effort to convince Khrushchev that the imminent invasion of Hungary was unnecessary.

What is more problematic is why the cable would be sent to Belgrade and not to Moscow, since it was presumably intended for

642. On page 17,407. Cited in Ibid.

643. See Chapter 3. The similarity in language between Dulles' pledge to Gromyko (not declassified until over 20 years later) and the cable to Belgrade which Feighan alleged was sent in November 1956 is striking.

Soviet consideration. But it turns out that on November 2, the very date on which the cable is alleged to have been sent, Khrushchev and Malenkov were visiting Tito in Yugoslavia, at his retreat in Brioni, in order to inform him of the forthcoming invasion of Hungary.⁶⁴⁴ Did the Eisenhower Administration know of this visit and intend the message in the cable for Tito's Soviet guests? It seems unlikely: none of the (declassified) cables from the US Embassy in Belgrade indicate an awareness that Khrushchev was in Yugoslavia, the staff of the Legation in Budapest does not seem to have known about the visit (and they would quickly have been informed, one would expect), and the CIA's Deputy Director for Intelligence did not recall having seen any reports to that effect.⁶⁴⁵ Seemingly, the only evidence of American suspicions at the time was that in Moscow, Ambassador Bohlen noted rather innocuously that Khrushchev and several other Politburo members seemed to be absent, although as late as November 3 Bohlen still believed that the "Soviets may not proceed immediately to [the] use of force."⁶⁴⁶ It would have been understandable, however, for American intelligence not to have realized that Khrushchev and Malenkov had flown to Brioni,

644. For details on these talks, see the next chapter.

645. See Bob Amory's interview with the author, Appendix A.

646. USMoscow 1048, November 3, 1956. Archives 764.00/11-356. But as a possible method of delaying a Soviet invasion, on the chance that one indeed had been decided on, Bohlen suggested that a reiteration of the Administration's commitment to non-involvement be made "direct[ly] to Bulganin in the name of the President," though even Bohlen admitted that by now such a policy was only "of doubtful effect."

because the visit had been arranged on extremely short notice and was cloaked in a secrecy unusual even for Communist officials.⁶⁴⁷ Yet even if the Administration somehow had succeeded in discovering that Khrushchev and Malenkov were in Brioni, it seems inconceivable (particularly judging from the State Department's sluggish reaction time throughout the Hungarian crisis) that a message for Tito or Khrushchev could have been sent out in time. And how was an Embassy official in Belgrade supposed to have gotten the cable to Tito in Brioni, and in time? The whole idea sounds quite implausible.

What must have been the case, then, was that the cable was designed for Tito alone, and that he was simply to use his influence with Khrushchev to try to restrain the Soviet leadership from intervening in Hungary. As such, it was pure coincidence that Khrushchev was in Yugoslavia at the time, though of little use since both he and Tito were inaccessible. But for officials in the Administration to have believed that Tito supported the American position on the Hungarian Revolution (as Eisenhower himself seems to have felt, if his warm letter to Tito only days after November 4 is any guide) shows a serious misunderstanding of the Yugoslav regime. The truth is that Tito

647. The Soviet plane was so tiny that it got Malenkov seasick, while on the Yugoslav side only four officials attended the discussions. News of the conference was apparently kept secret within the Yugoslav bureaucracy for quite some time (no small feat), and Yugoslav foreknowledge of Khrushchev's arrival - the only type of information which could have allowed the CIA to know of the visit ahead of time - was almost nonexistent. See Micunovic, Moscow Diary, pp. 131-142.

was informed ahead of time that a bloodbath was about to take place in Hungary, and not only did Tito in fact not pass along to Nagy what he now knew, but he actually gave Khrushchev several suggestions as to who should participate in the new Hungarian government which the Red Army was about to impose. The Eisenhower Administration's belief that Tito was capable, or even desirous, of convincing Khrushchev not to intervene in Hungary turned out to be quite faulty, but no more so than the President's expectation that by acquiescing in Soviet suppression of the Hungarian Revolution the United States would be able to develop more stable relations with the Soviet leadership.

President Eisenhower's unwillingness to take calculated risks for the sake of liberty, even in an era in which the United States enjoyed overwhelming nuclear advantage, did not bode well for future American ability to contain Soviet power, let alone to roll it back. Observing from Western Europe what had happened in Hungary, Raymond Aron perhaps summed up the failure of US policy best when he wrote that "we all had the feeling that ... there existed a hidden Russo-American Pact against war, an agreement probably more binding than any other alliance."⁶⁴⁸ The Eisenhower Administration should never have allowed itself to react to intimidation from Moscow in such a way as to become a party to an unspoken but implicit division of Europe with the Soviet Communists.

648. Raymond Aron, "The Meaning of Destiny," in Ten Years After: The Hungarian Revolution in the Perspective of History, ed. Tamás Aczél (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), p. 21.

CHAPTER FIVE:
THE SOVIET UNION AND THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION

The Soviet Decision to Intervene

It is one of the central premises of this study that the Soviet leadership reached its decision to intervene in Hungary only after a relatively drawn-out internal debate. Though ostensibly an effort to address the vital question of what risks the Soviet Union should take in order to protect its imperial possessions, this debate was in truth a struggle waged on factional grounds and with important implications in the bitter competition for power underway at the time among the principal Party leaders. The factional debate in the Politburo effectively paralyzed Soviet policy toward Poland and Hungary from June through October 1956, allowed the Yugoslav and Chinese to play a more important role than would otherwise have been the case in Soviet decisions, and might even have resulted in a withdrawal from Hungary if Hungarian and Western leaders had taken proper advantage of the opportunity. As it was, however, the Soviet invasion of November 4 is noteworthy not only because it ended a decade-long period in which (at least from a Soviet point of view) the ability of the USSR to hold on to its East European glacis was still very much in question, but also because it

marked a blow to Khrushchev's attempt to win undisputed control over the Soviet Party. In making his extremely risky denunciation of Stalin before the Twentieth Party Congress in February, Khrushchev had tried to use reform of the Party as the issue by which he would undercut and then oust the "leftist" opposition identified with Molotov. But in yielding to his colleagues' insistence upon intervening in Hungary in November, Khrushchev suffered a major setback. Khrushchev's adversaries in the Party could now argue that his gambit at the Twentieth Congress had needlessly shaken the Soviet Union's grip (in other words, the CPSU's) over Eastern Europe as well as its standing with respect to the United States.⁶⁴⁹ That Molotov and Malenkov could attempt to remove Khrushchev in June 1957 after two years of passivity in the face of Khrushchev's intrigues against them almost certainly indicates that new power had accrued to them in the wake of the Hungarian crisis.⁶⁵⁰

At one point during the Soviet-Yugoslav talks at Brioni on November 2 and 3, Yugoslav Ambassador to Moscow Veljko Micunovic had the bad taste to inquire of Khrushchev and Malenkov as to

649. Khrushchev himself later even admitted (to Anwar Sadat) that "Molotov thought it was my policies that had led to the trouble in Hungary ... and that my tolerance of Tito had encouraged the Hungarians." Mohammed Heikal, The Sphinx and the Commissar (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), p. 92. Cited in Jiri Valenta, "Soviet Decision Making and the Hungarian Revolution," in Király, Lotze, and Dreisziger, The First War Between Socialist States, p. 271.

650. Khrushchev did not even address the December 1956 meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, while Pervukhin, one of Malenkov's supporters, was given new authority for supervision over the Soviet economy. Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence, p. 603.

what were the views of the individual Soviet Politburo members concerning the situation in Hungary, whereupon a pause followed and Khrushchev finally awkwardly replied that "complete and absolute" agreement had prevailed. Malenkov added quickly that yes, this "same degree of agreement had prevailed at all phases of the events and that it still prevailed."⁶⁵¹ Malenkov was probably sarcastic and Khrushchev evasive at best, because all indications suggest that the Soviet Politburo was divided right from the start of the crisis in Hungary on how to react and that the decision to intervene was made only after lengthy internal deliberations. The many reversals in Soviet positions regarding events in Hungary between October 23 and 31, the two visits to Budapest by Mikoyan and Suslov, the apparent lack of instructions to Soviet military and diplomatic personnel stationed in Hungary all seem to point to vacillation at the top in Moscow. Even John Foster Dulles observed on October 29 that "undoubtedly there was a battle on in the Presidium," in which "some of the people probably would want to go back to the old Stalinistic policies,"⁶⁵² while Ambassador Bohlen recognized that "there has undoubtedly been considerable discussion in [the] Soviet leadership" on whether they should "cut their losses and remove [the] troops under [the] best face saving cover that could be

651. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, p. 139. For more on the Soviet-Yugoslav talks of November 2, see the next section, The Revolution and the Communist Bloc.

652. Dulles to Eisenhower, "Telephone Calls," October 29, 1956, 8 AM. DDELib, AWF; Dulles-Herter Series; Box 6.

devised, or else return to open use of force."⁶⁵³ Yet we do not need to rely on the assessments of American officials to know that the Politburo was divided in October and November 1956, because Khrushchev later admitted as much himself. In a speech to thousands of workers at the Hungarian Ganz-Mavag engineering and railway plant on December 2, 1959, Khrushchev recalled the decision to intervene in the following terms:

In those crucial days ... we, the Soviet Communists, discussed how to help the Hungarian workers' class, the Hungarian working people. Some of our comrades said: will the Hungarian comrades understand it correctly if we render them assistance? Are not some workers deceived by the counterrevolutionaries siding with the fascist rebels? But we, comrades, were confident that we were helping our class brothers...⁶⁵⁴

The debate within the Soviet Politburo on how to deal with events in Hungary was intimated as early as June and July 1956, when first Suslov and then Mikoyan were dispatched to Budapest to deal with the deterioration in the Hungarian Party's authority and legitimacy. Khrushchev's inability to carry out de-Stalinization in Eastern Europe was underlined by the fact that the man installed as the new Hungarian First Secretary in July was not an opponent of the Stalinist Rákosi regime, such as János

653. USMoscow 1048, November 3, 1956. Archives 764.00/11-356.

654. Quoted in "Kádár's Congress in Hungary," East Europe 9 (no. 1, January 1960): p. 17. My italics. The use of phrases like "some of us said" in Communist speeches almost always indicates factional debate with policy implications. See also Márton, The Forbidden Sky, p. 272.

In what are alleged to be his memoirs, Khrushchev tries to cover up this split, claiming that the decision on the part of the Politburo that "it would be inexcusable for us to stay neutral and not to help the working class of Hungary" was made by "unanimous resolution." Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, p. 417.

Kádár, but Ernő Gerő, Rákosi's partner in terror and by some accounts Stalin's favorite in Hungary. The fact that Kádár or one of his allies was not chosen strongly suggests that Molotov's faction was regaining some of its former power in Moscow.⁶⁵⁵ As with the turmoil in Hungary, the simultaneous deterioration of Party control in Poland offered fodder for the shifting Politburo coalitions and also seems to have brought greater influence to the Molotov group, if Molotov's presence in the Soviet delegation to Warsaw of October 19 is any guide. At the same time, Malenkov and his supporters probably felt obliged to retreat from their earlier willingness to support Khrushchev's backing for reformers in Poland, Hungary, and elsewhere, even though the policies of the New Course had first been put into place three years earlier by Malenkov. Nevertheless, by the time of the Hungarian Revolution, Khrushchev was still by far the strongest figure in the Politburo, capable of overruling the Soviet military and permitting Gomulka to remain in power in Poland (albeit a prudent choice considering the Poles' readiness to fight). A week later, Khrushchev's adversaries were again unable to prevail, when Kádár was appointed First Secretary and Imre Nagy made Premier in Hungary; at that point Khrushchev was presumably not above pointing to the folly of his colleagues' preference for Gerő in July.

In the days after October 25, however, pressure on Khrushchev to liquidate the "Hungarian adventure" grew steadily.

655. See Chapter 2.

The Hungarian Communist Party's failure to regain control over events in Hungary, Andropov's ability to convince several leading Hungarian Communists to work with the Russians, the disinclination of the United States to press the Kremlin to come to terms with the Nagy regime, and the extent to which the Western powers were distracted in Suez all became fully apparent to the Soviet leadership only by about October 30. The factions in the Politburo which were inclined to favor a more cautious course in Hungary in all likelihood found it increasingly difficult to counter the arguments for prompt military intervention made by Molotov (who had opposed even the withdrawal from Austria), Voroshilov (who had helped oversee the Hungarian Communists' initial seizure of power), and Zhukov (who had been agitating for action even against Gomulka). At the moment the Hungarian Revolution initially broke out, though, the Soviet leadership could not have anticipated either that Imre Nagy would be unable to hold the Hungarian Communist Party together or that the West, particularly the United States, would take such a hands-off approach. During those first few days after October 23 - if Khrushchev's confession of December 1959 is to be believed - the men in the Kremlin had to consider the possibility that they might be compelled to acquiesce in the changes in Hungary or even to withdraw from the country.

There were several reasons why, in the first days of the Hungarian Revolution, after the use of Soviet troops on the night of October 23/24 had proved to have been a mistake, the Soviet Politburo was obliged to think seriously of non-intervention in

Hungary, beginning with the fact that the leadership (or at least the Khrushchev faction, in October 1956 still holding the upper hand) had committed itself to a thaw in East-West relations and improved relations with the United States. In part out of the belief that Stalin's crude pressure on the West had proven counterproductive, and in part because a policy of Peaceful Coexistence in Europe was seen to be the most prudent way to win major gains for the Soviet Union in the Third World, the post-Stalin Soviet leadership had terminated the war in Korea, withdrawn Moscow's ineffective claims against Turkey, reopened diplomatic relations with Israel, and hinted at a willingness (probably not genuine, though never probed by the West) to make concessions on the German question in order to keep West Germany out of NATO. Most importantly, the July 1955 Geneva Summit with President Eisenhower had ushered in a period of improved Soviet-American relations, which, from the perspective of many of the Kremlin leaders, represented a tacit American recognition of the USSR's incorporation of the Baltic states and occupation of Eastern Europe - and simultaneously held out the promise of a dulled American vigilance against Soviet intrigues elsewhere. Consistent with this estimate of relatively favorable international conditions for a policy of Peaceful Coexistence, Khrushchev modified Lenin's contention that war was inevitable as long as capitalism exists by declaring that changed political conditions had produced a situation where "war is not fatalistically inevitable." On the other hand, Malenkov's view that war would spell "the destruction of world civilization" was

rejected by Khrushchev and even more forcefully by Molotov, who continued to hold that war would mean the end only of capitalism.⁶⁵⁶ In short, Khrushchev's hope was to win American cooperation in reducing tensions in potentially explosive areas like Europe, while at the same time allowing the Soviet Union to gain new influence at the expense of the West in areas such as India or Egypt where direct military confrontation with the United States was less likely. However, Soviet intervention in Hungary would risk overturning this promising détente, with all its potential for Soviet gains in the future.⁶⁵⁷

Khrushchev and his colleagues in the Soviet leadership had been working assiduously to improve their relations not only with the United States but also with the non-Communist states of Europe as well. In addition to the Kremlin's initiative toward Turkey, the Soviet leadership agreed to military withdrawals from

656. State Department Office of Intelligence Research, Intelligence Report: The Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, March 6, 1956, p. 8. This document may be found in the microfilm collection assembled by University Publications of America. See their "Guide to OSS/State Department Intelligence and Research Reports: Volume 11, The Soviet Union, 1950-1961." Henceforth form of citation: UPA Microfilm Collection.

657. Already the USSR had been able to make new inroads into Egypt, highlighted by the Autumn 1955 Czech-Egyptian arms deal. It seems that the means by which Khrushchev was able to determine that the Western leaders would not try too vigorously to counter Soviet inroads into Egypt or elsewhere in the Third World was not only through his reading of Eisenhower and Dulles at Geneva, but from the fact that the Western powers had failed to object when Dmitri Shepilov, one of Khrushchev's favorites and soon to be the Foreign Minister, began a series of discussions with Nasser in Cairo even while the Geneva summit was still in session. See Uri Ra'anani, The USSR Arms the Third World, pp. 151-152.

Finland and Austria, and welcomed Adenauer to Moscow in September 1955 despite the entry of West Germany into NATO. By the time of Adenauer's visit, it had undoubtedly become apparent to the regime in Moscow that (despite Soviet propaganda to the contrary) West Germany was not a reincarnation of the Third Reich. Though the Federal Republic's proposed 500,000-man army was not the type of development that the Soviet leaders were eager to see, the Bundeswehr nonetheless was clearly not going to be deploying nuclear weapons and was all in all not going to be keeping the Politburo awake at night.⁶⁵⁸ What is more, because of the declining numbers of young men available for military service - a product of Soviet demographic losses during the war - Khrushchev was forced to find expedient ways to draw down the size of the Red Army (though this was a task made more palatable by Soviet developments in the field of atomic and thermonuclear weapons), and the effort to secure a few years of reduced tensions in Europe was one key such step. Accordingly, the withdrawal from Austria in 1955, facilitated by the recognition in Moscow that Bonn would never be a military threat to the USSR and coming just as KGB units were wrapping up their successful struggle against Baltic and Ukrainian resistance, permitted the Soviet leadership to concentrate its ground troops in those areas of the empire considered most important. But even so, Soviet forces were still quite overextended, and the need to keep so many different pieces of territory under control was one reason why the Soviet

658. See Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence, pp.558-559.

leadership might have been prepared to evacuate Hungary in 1956, if the costs of staying had ever been perceived in Moscow to have been too high. The crushing of the Hungarian Revolution and the accompanying acquiescence of the West, while effectively smothering dissent in Eastern Europe for several years, did not completely solve the problem, and it was not until 1958, when Khrushchev felt sufficiently confident in the regime of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej to withdraw the Red Army from Romania, that the Soviet leaders were able to concentrate fully on other regions and to turn up the pressure again on Western Europe and Berlin without worrying about insurrections in their East European possessions.

Even the retreat from the naval base at Porkkalla, Finland, reflected the changed outlook in the Kremlin. True, the base was militarily of little value, but just the same the gesture was the type that Stalin would never have made. In part what stood behind it was Khrushchev's desire to establish better relations with the Finns after the sometimes difficult relations of the postwar years, an effort which culminated in the visit of Khrushchev and Bulganin to Helsinki in June 1957 (during which Khrushchev was nearly overthrown). Yet the case of Finland is particularly significant for a study of Soviet and American policy toward the Hungarian Revolution, not only because it was an example of Soviet benevolence toward an East European state, but because there is evidence that Khrushchev viewed Finland as in some way a model for policy toward Eastern Europe: at the height of the Hungarian crisis Khrushchev was heard to remark

privately that perhaps relations with Finland were the type which the Soviet Union should have sought to establish from the start toward all of Eastern Europe.⁶⁵⁹ Interestingly, officials at the American Legation in Budapest seem to have been thinking along these same lines, although they had no way to know what Khrushchev was saying at the time in Moscow. On October 30 the Legation reported that rather than antagonize the Russians, the Hungarians should instead try to "make it sound comfortable to [the] Soviets that, as in [the] case of [their] relations with [the] Finns, they [should] be willing [to] let well enough alone."⁶⁶⁰ Of course it is somewhat difficult to see how Soviet relations with Finland could have served as a model for relations between Communist countries, but the fact that Khrushchev placed the emphasis on Finland that he did suggests that he, and conceivably others in the Politburo as well, was prepared to accept some significant degree of change within the bloc.

Perhaps the most important development in the post-Stalin campaign to reduce tensions in Europe, however, and certainly Khrushchev's most celebrated foray into foreign affairs, was the Soviet rapprochement with Yugoslavia. Khrushchev had followed up his May 1955 pilgrimage to Belgrade with the de-Stalinization campaign at home which culminated in the "Secret speech" in

659. State Department Office of Intelligence Research, Status of Soviet-Finnish Relations: A Survey on the Eve of the Bulganin-Khrushchev Visit to Finland, May 29, 1957, p. 7. UPA Microfilm Collection. See also Bohlen, Witness to History, p. 413.

660. USBudapest 188, October 30, 1956. Archives 764.00/10-3056.

February 1956. For Tito, this (and the demotion of Malenkov in favor of Khrushchev's partner, Bulganin) was tangible proof of Khrushchev's commitment to better relations with Yugoslavia. Accordingly, in June 1956 Tito ventured to the Soviet Union, where Khrushchev, much to the dismay of Molotov and others, seems genuinely to have sought out Tito's advice on Eastern Europe, and - particularly in the case of Poland - to a certain extent to have taken it to heart. Micunovic observed that "Khrushchev ... had personally invested more in the Tito visit [of June] than in any other Soviet political move in the spring of 1956,"⁶⁶¹ but at the same time noted, significantly, that opposition to Khrushchev in the Soviet Party had grown: "You can even hear comments in Moscow to the effect that the people responsible [for the Poznan uprising] are those who condemned Stalin."⁶⁶² As with his campaign against Stalin, then, Khrushchev was using the rapprochement with Belgrade in large measure to undercut opposition to his own Party faction, and if he now proved able to finesse his way through the Hungarian challenge without having to resort to a massive use of force, then his Yugoslav policy could no longer have been convincingly attacked within the Politburo. A Soviet invasion of Hungary, on the other hand, particularly if it returned Rákosi, Gerő, and their clique to power, threatened not only to set back the whole rubric of Soviet-Yugoslav relations, but to vindicate Khrushchev's adversaries in the

661. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, p. 78.

662. Ibid., p. 77.

Party. Moreover, this reversal in ties with Yugoslavia would be accompanied by the end of improved relations with the Western powers and by the probable scuttling of future chances of keeping NATO weak and divided - a prospect which few of the Politburo members could have found very appealing. Naturally, these factors in themselves were not enough of a reason not to invade Hungary, but since Khrushchev's pursuit of a policy of Peaceful Coexistence had given the Kremlin some stake in a more relaxed international environment, the Soviet leadership would now have cause to think twice before intervening.

A second reason not to intervene was the element of risk: military action by the Soviet Union, even in Eastern Europe, almost by definition carried with it some potential for escalation into war with the United States. Even without the presence in Washington of an administration which repeatedly had made a point of calling for the liberation of the satellites, the fact that America enjoyed a nuclear superiority that bordered on a monopoly was enough to advise extreme caution in Moscow. The need to proceed warily was made all the more imperative by the fact that the intentions of the United States were not known in Moscow. Although today the division of Europe between East and West is clearly delineated (and ratified by the 1975 Helsinki Accords), in 1956 that division was not regarded as permanent by either side. The Malenkovite camp in the Soviet leadership had argued that Soviet power was being spread too thin, while American leaders had made it amply known that they viewed the East European regimes as illegitimate - and had gone so far as to

attempt to overthrow Hoxha's regime in Tirana. From the Soviet perspective it was less important that the Western campaign in Albania had been blown from the start and in any case incompetently directed than that Eisenhower and Dulles were perhaps only biding their time before launching a new effort to bring down one of the shaky East European regimes. Such at least seemed to be the reason for the CIA's Red Sox/Red Cap training program and for the activities of the Free Europe Committee. It was true that for the time being the Eisenhower Administration seemed less interested in overthrowing Communist regimes than in seeking agreements with Moscow on disarmament or regional issues, but the Kremlin leaders had to be asking themselves just how long this Western inertia could last. And how often could the Soviet leadership count on a Philby to be in the right place?

It could not have been far-fetched, therefore, for the Soviet leaders to have envisioned a shift in American policy toward a more vigorous campaign to roll back the Communist occupation of at least part of Eastern Europe. Although the events of 1956 ended up demonstrating that the United States, at least the way the Eisenhower Administration sought to proceed, would not play any role in East European affairs, the pre-October 1956 Soviet leadership could not have been so sure. At one point in July, Khrushchev told Micunovic that the West was working toward opening a "breach in the front" in Eastern Europe, and although it is difficult to imagine that Khrushchev completely believed this, his words nonetheless reflect an understanding of the potentially significant role which the United States could

play behind the Iron Curtain.⁶⁶³ For the Soviet leaders, one of the most pressing questions in the initial stage of the Hungarian Revolution was whether Eisenhower would attempt to link America's nuclear strength to the Administration's stated goals of liberating Eastern Europe. Signs of American commitment to change in the bloc might well have dictated caution in Moscow.

A third factor arguing against intervention was the Soviet leadership's fear of getting bogged down in a drawn-out war against Hungarian forces or guerrillas. In the same way that the obvious cohesiveness and anti-Soviet resolve of the Polish army in October 1956 was a deterrent to Soviet intervention and that the known disinclination to fight on the part of the Czechs in 1968 was one factor inviting invasion, the state of morale, organization, and firepower in the Hungarian revolutionary forces of 1956 was an important criterion in the Soviet decision of whether to intervene against the revolution in Hungary. It would appear that the posture of the Hungarian forces lay somewhere between the Polish and Czech examples cited: most units were prepared to support the Revolution, if not under established command than as armed groups, but the level of weapons and

663. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, p. 88. I consider the statement cited by Micunovic to be more credible than the claim later attributed to Khrushchev that John Foster Dulles sought "to push socialism in Europe back to the borders of the Soviet Union" and "seemed to be obsessed with the idea of encirclement." Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, p. 398. That later statement was made well after the crisis had passed and may not represent accurately the view of the Soviet leadership in 1956. Without doubt much of what appears in Khrushchev Remembers is a post facto effort to justify Soviet behavior during the Revolution.

destructiveness available was limited.⁶⁶⁴ Of course, the extent to which the Kremlin was correctly informed about the latest state of morale and resolve among the Hungarian forces remains a matter of conjecture, but the presence of Soviet advisors in the country must have contributed to Moscow's knowledge, particularly after the disastrous first Soviet intervention. Despite the heroic stand taken by Hungary's workers, students, and soldiers between October 23 and October 27, it must have been plain to Soviet observers, including Mikoyan and Suslov, that the Hungarians would not be able to mount effective resistance to a full-scale Soviet invasion headed up by several armored divisions.

Similarly, belief on the part of the Soviet Politburo that the Hungarian leadership was united behind Imre Nagy would have mitigated against intervention. For example, the unity of the Poles in supporting Gomulka in 1956 greatly impressed Khrushchev and his colleagues, while - to cite a later case - the readiness of several Afghan leaders in 1979 to support a Soviet invasion made Brezhnev's decision to intervene that much easier.⁶⁶⁵ On the other hand, the absence of a collaborationist faction among the Czech leadership in 1968 did not dissuade Brezhnev and his partners from intervention there. In the Hungarian case, it seems likely that by October 31 the Soviet leadership felt that

664. See Király, "Hungary's Army: Its Part in The Revolt."

665. See Jiri Valenta, "From Prague to Kabul: The Soviet Style of Invasion," International Security 5 (no. 2, Fall 1980): p. 131.

it could count on support from several members of the Nagy regime, including both former Stalinists (such as Imre Horváth) and apparent supporters of the Revolution (such as Kádár). However, it is still not fully clear to what extent direct contact was maintained during the Revolution between Soviet officials and their prospective allies in Budapest. According to at least one account, Károly Janza, the Minister of Defense whom Nagy had reluctantly accepted into the government, held secret talks with the Soviet High Command in Budapest. -Nagy's right-hand man, Geza Losonczy, was reported to have found out about the talks, and Janza was promptly dropped from the leadership.⁶⁶⁶ Moreover, Andropov was almost certainly in contact with Ferenc Münnich for several days, and probably with Kádár as well prior to his defection. And if Andropov's efforts to recruit Béla Király⁶⁶⁷ are any guide, the staff of the Soviet Embassy must have been trying to turn around any of Nagy's advisors whom they could find. Still, with the important exceptions of Kádár and Münnich, Soviet agents do not seem to have had great success in finding Hungarian quislings.⁶⁶⁸ It is not possible to know for

666. Barber, Seven Days of Freedom, p. 115. Miklós Vásárhelyi maintains that this incident never took place. See Vásárhelyi's interview with the author, Appendix R.

667. See Chapter 1.

668. In 1979, by contrast, Soviet Lieutenant General Viktor Paputin, the First Deputy Minister of the Interior, visited Afghanistan a full month before the invasion and succeeded in organizing opposition to the (Communist) regime in power. See Valenta, "From Prague to Kabul," p. 131. In 1956, KGB Chief Ivan Serov helped oversee the suppression of the Revolution and the thousands of deportations, but as far as

certain whether Kádár's readiness to defect was one of the prime reasons why the Politburo chose to intervene on November 4, since Kádár's availability might have been only an insurance of sorts for Moscow should the Kremlin's efforts to control the Revolution have failed, but it seems clear that the failure of the Hungarian leadership to stand more forcefully together did not help their cause. On balance, it did not work to the Hungarians' advantage that two of the factors which if present might well have prompted the Soviet Politburo to consider more seriously non-intervention - a capacity to mount prolonged effective resistance as well as a measure of unity among the country's political leadership - were largely absent. But this did not become obvious until October 29 or 30.⁶⁶⁹

A fourth issue which must have given the Soviet leadership substantial second thoughts in considering a massive intervention in Hungary after October 27 was the unreliability of Soviet forces in Eastern Europe. The poor performance at the outset of the Revolution of the Soviet troops stationed in Hungary prior to October 23 was unquestionably a shock to Khrushchev and the

is known he did not arrive in Hungary until November 3, the eve of the intervention.

669. According to János Radványi, it was the unprovoked deaths of City Party Chairman Imre Mező and several of his associates at the hands of an unruly crowd on October 30 which played an important role in convincing Khrushchev, probably through Andropov, that Imre Nagy could not maintain control over events. Ironically, within a day or two of this incident, Nagy's regime was able to gain better command over the street violence. And it must be reiterated that there were still many AVH and KGB provocateurs working to discredit Nagy and his followers.

others in the Politburo. If nothing else, this was the main reason why fresh troops from the Asian regions of the Soviet Union had to be called up for deployment in the second intervention. The attempt to use the Soviet divisions garrisoned in Hungary to prop up Gerö on October 24 was an operational disaster, with major logistical shortcomings: some Soviet units, for instance, were cut off and left without food, prompting Russian soldiers to sell their guns to Hungarians in exchange for food.⁶⁷⁰ In Győr, Soviet troops who had been stationed in Western Hungary before the revolution refused to fight the revolutionaries, while Soviet commanders in villages throughout Hungary often rushed up to the nearest insurgent leader and told him that their army units would prefer just to sit that round out. In Veszprem, for example, the Russian commander informed the students holed up in the university that although his artillery had been duly aimed against the university buildings, he would not use it unless his forces were themselves attacked.⁶⁷¹ But the extent of the unreliability of Red Army forces for use in Hungary was not fully underlined until the second intervention, when many Soviet troops, upon first seeing the Danube, thought it was the Suez Canal. Others demanded to be

670. Interviews 1-M and 8-M, Hungarian Refugee Project Manuscripts, Bakhmeteff Archives, Columbia University. These manuscripts are the texts of over 500 interviews conducted in 1956 and 1957 with Hungarians who had fled to the West. The accounts are in many cases emotional, and predominantly anecdotal, but corroborate the fact of Soviet troop problems.

671. Interview 8-M, Hungarian Refugee Project, Columbia University.

taken to the fighting against the British. Discovery of the true state of affairs led to numerous desertions, with Soviet soldiers often being required to guard unreliable or detained comrades.⁶⁷² Soviet tank crews, even those manned by non-Europeans, often seemed stunned to be fighting civilians and workers, and allowed themselves to be captured and disarmed by young boys,⁶⁷³ while Soviet soldiers confessed that only the officers' pistols kept the men in line.⁶⁷⁴ In some cases the contingents that arrived in the second Soviet invasion met resistance from units which had been stationed in Hungary for some time and who still refused to fight: near Győr, for instance, one refugee on his way to Austria claimed to have observed a Soviet barracks destroyed in fighting solely among Russians.⁶⁷⁵ It is doubtful that the Soviet leadership knew before November 4 just how poorly their troops would operate against an uprising obviously led by workers, but the results of the first intervention were probably

672. Interview 3-M, Hungarian Refugee Project, Columbia University. The Hungarian interviewed here went on to speculate that judging from what he had heard, apprehended Soviet deserters would probably be shot. According to Sándor Kopácsi, several Soviet tank commanders "were executed in the courtyard of the barracks in the town of Mikolc for the crime of failing to crush women and children under their caterpillar tracks." Kopácsi, In the Name of the Working Class, p. 232.

673. Friedin, The Forgotten People, pp. 226-227.

674. Peter Schmid, "Budapest Under Fire: The Conspiracy of Freedom," Commentary 23 (no. 1, January 1957): p. 30.

675. Interview 8-M, Hungarian Refugee Project, Columbia University. The story sounds incredible, but how else would a Soviet barracks come to be destroyed? It was hardly the type of target that Hungarian insurgents would go out of their way to attack.

enough to have given Khrushchev an idea of the extent of the shortcomings within the ranks of the Red Army. On the other hand, Red Army units had always been wracked by disorderliness, alcoholism, and political unreliability, but had managed to defeat the Wehrmacht and occupy half of Europe just the same.

On the other side of the ledger there were many factors which favored intervention, but although these eventually proved to be decisive in the Soviet leaders' counsels, this was never an inevitable conclusion. In the end, Khrushchev and his colleagues were able to determine that the necessity of suppressing the Hungarian Revolution was worth the risks which were perceived to be involved, but had those risks been seen to be greater, the decision in Moscow might have been different.

One of the most important questions which the Soviet leadership was making an effort to answer was whether the events in Hungary represented an effort to generate reforms within the Communist framework (roughly on the lines of what Gomulka was advocating in Poland) or even an effort to establish a Communist-led society with a minimum of Soviet influence (similar to Tito's Yugoslavia) or whether the Revolution was aimed at the overthrow of Communist rule in Hungary altogether. Were the latter situation to be the case, then acquiescence by the Soviet leaders in the coming to power of democracy in Hungary would represent a landmark retreat for the "socialist camp" and perhaps an insurmountable discrediting of the Soviet system itself. That the Soviet leaders should be so concerned with the permanence of Communist rule is attributable to the Marxist application of

Hegel's dialectic. The pattern of thesis and antithesis forming synthesis is to end, Marx claimed, with the establishment of a socialist state (though Marx was rather ambiguous concerning how long the state would be needed in a socialist society). Thus the coming to power, always by "revolution," of a "socialist" movement brings to an end the historical process, which can be neither restarted nor reversed. The abstract correctness of this theory of history is what has been cited by successive leaders of the Soviet Union as their justification for power: they are the guardians of the process by which "socialism" is preserved, as well as the sole interpreters of how that process is to be expedited, achieved, and defended. However, were an established recognized Communist regime to fall from power it would destroy the image of an unalterable historical process and thus potentially eradicate the justification for power by which Communist regimes everywhere, even in Moscow, derive their legitimacy. Of course, except for dogmatic diehards in Leningrad or Tirana and the so-called "intellectuals" of Paris or Bologna, few people see this theory today as anything other than a myth which facilitates opportunism and totalitarianism. But the ideology is crucial because it has always been invoked as the justification for the existence of the Soviet state, and while the individual Soviet leaders may not themselves believe most of it, they have been unwilling to see it permanently undermined with the dislodging from power of a ruling Communist party.

Nevertheless, Communist regimes in Bavaria and Hungary were overthrown following the First World War, a Soviet Republic in

northern Iran was liquidated in 1946, and pro-Soviet regimes in the Third World have often given way to more pro-Western or neutral ones (as in Guinea, Egypt, and Chile). Yet in each of these countries the regime in question (whether of Béla Kun, Sékou Touré, or Allende) either failed to establish itself securely in the first place or was never given accreditation by (the very careful) Soviet ideologues as full members of the "socialist camp." In no case to this day have the Soviet leaders permitted any fully accredited member to be ruled by any system other than the Communist variety (whereas the Kremlin has grudgingly learned to live with non-Soviet models, as in China and Yugoslavia). No established Communist regime has ever been allowed to fall from power. Such is the doctrine of "irreversibility." But it is a double-edged sword, because while by virtue of its success over time it contributes to the Marxist claim that Communism is inevitable (and repeated over the years with nothing to refute it, that can become seductive propaganda, luring even those who wish Communism nothing but ill), it also means that the Soviet leaders may be compelled to risk war with the USSR's adversaries to defend "socialism" wherever circumstances require. In any event, in October 1956 there was not yet an articulated "Brezhnev Doctrine," but the principle was the same: "Just as, in Lenin's words, a man living in a society cannot be free from the society," the Doctrine of 1968 asserts, "a particular socialist state, existing in a system of other

states composing the socialist community, cannot be free from the common interests of that community."⁶⁷⁶

Just the same, in 1956 there had been as yet no meaningful precedents to reinforce the principle, and the Soviet leadership might have been prepared to acquiesce in the coming to power of a non-Communist regime in Hungary if circumstances had required. If necessary, the "socialist" credentials of the Hungarian regime could have been revoked post facto, or perhaps Rákosi and Gerő could have been labeled "dogmatic adventurers."⁶⁷⁷ With the exception of the Zhdanovite faction, it is doubtful whether Stalin or his successors expected to maintain full Soviet control over all of the Central and East European territories they occupied after 1944-45. If Hungary had to be evacuated along with the eastern third of Austria as part of the price for occupying the Baltic states, Poland, and a huge section of Germany itself, then that might not have been considered too high a price to pay. After all, Lenin himself had signed away the Ukraine under the principle of "one step backward, two steps forward" when the course of events made it necessary, and with the exception of the relatively minor Soviet withdrawals from Iran, Austria, and Finland, the postwar leadership in Moscow so far had not had to take any major steps backward - despite a

676. Sergei Kovalyev, "Sovereignty and International Duties," Pravda, September 26, 1968.

677. Trotsky's role in helping the Bolsheviks take power in Russia and Béla Kun's near success in keeping control of Hungary were explained away in similar or equally arbitrary fashion.

marked Soviet atomic and economic disadvantage relative to the United States. Yet while it was true that Stalin had allowed the Communist republic in northern Iran to be liquidated in 1946 and that Kuusinen's declaration of a "socialist" regime in Finland had been conveniently tossed aside after 1940, in neither of those cases had the Soviet Union staked as much as in Eastern Europe since 1944. Moreover, despite their ability to rewrite history or to order tactical retreats where necessary, none of the Soviet leaders in 1956 was eager to suffer the blow to Soviet (and their own) prestige of seeing Communist rule in Hungary overturned.

What remained crucial, then, was the situation on the ground in Budapest: could Nagy keep a lid on the turmoil or would Communist rule be dislodged? For a week the Kremlin leaders watched, with Andropov's reports scrutinized and Mikoyan and Suslov dispatched twice as emissaries to Budapest. The news could not have been encouraging. In fact there can be little doubt that in watching closely the course of events in Budapest, each one of the Soviet leaders must have been stunned by the rapidity with which the Hungarian Party collapsed, as over a decade of Communist indoctrination of the population and education of the youth evaporated seemingly overnight. Students, workers, and soldiers alike discarded their Party cards, supposedly "socialist" police forces joined the Revolution, and Party organization in the provinces and towns collapsed

altogether.⁶⁷⁸ Writing in Moscow on October 25, Veljko Micunovic reflected what must have been the view in the Soviet capital on the part of the informed elite:

It might have been possible to find a way of canalizing the demonstrations which broke out at the beginning. But no effort was made to do so ... It is difficult to say how it will all finish. It looks like the beginning of the breakup of the socialist camp, which has snapped at its weakest point.⁶⁷⁹

In its official proclamations, the Nagy regime stressed that it was maintaining Communist rule, but the course of events between October 25 and 30 seemed to belie those claims, or at least reveal that the government in Budapest could not control the Revolution.

Yet if the Soviet leaders were worried by the collapse of the Communist Party in Hungary, they must have been even more alarmed by the effect that the Revolution seemed to be having on the other members of the Bloc - even the USSR itself. Lenin's assertion in 1917 that Communism would survive in Russia only if it could come to power elsewhere as well had been swept under the rug in 1920 when it became apparent that the Soviet leaders would have to content themselves for the time being with concentrating on the preservation of the Soviet Russian state, but in 1956 Lenin's principle was seen in Moscow to be much more than just an

678. Imre Nagy and his supporters were as amazed as the Russians at the collapse of the Hungarian Communist Party - to which, as has been mentioned many times, they felt the deepest allegiance. Geza Losonczy, one of Nagy's closest advisors noted that, in effect, "It took less than twenty-four hours for the apparatus to disintegrate." Quoted in Friedin, The Forgotten People, p. 229.

679. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, p. 127.

ideological abstraction, when the collapse of Communist authority in Hungary was perceived by the Soviet leadership potentially to place in jeopardy the stability of Communism everywhere. Almost immediately upon the overthrow of the Gerő regime, Hungary's "socialist" neighbors began to report signs of dissent. In Yugoslavia, restiveness among the Hungarian population in the Vojvodina threatened to embolden the latent anti-regime feelings in other regions of the country: in Zagreb and elsewhere in Croatia, students were arrested for "Croatian nationalism" and for daring to show solidarity with the Hungarians.⁶⁸⁰ The Polish leadership, for its part, (rightfully) still considered itself to be in a very fragile position, and worried that success on the part of the Hungarian insurgents in moving away from Communist rule might trigger new demands by Polish dissidents and Party radicals, in turn strengthening the hand of the Stalinists in the Party and perhaps bringing about Soviet military intervention in Poland after all.⁶⁸¹ East Germany's Walter Ulbricht hastened to remind Moscow of the 1953 workers' revolt and added that such an insurrection might conceivably break out again at any moment in the GDR. In fact, according to at least one account, strikes had already broken out in support of the Hungarians at factories in

680. Robert R. King, Minorities Under Communism: Nationalities as a Source of Tension among Balkan Communist States (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. 86.

681. Unlike the other East European leaders, though, the Poles did not urge Khrushchev to intervene in Hungary. See below.

Magdeburg, Erfurt, Chemnitz, and Halle.⁶⁸² Similarly, Party Secretary Antonín Novotný reported from Prague signs of an imminent uprising among the Hungarians of Slovakia.⁶⁸³

Perhaps the Bloc's most serious disturbances outside Hungary, however, were taking place in Romania. In the heavily Hungarian-populated areas of Transylvania and the Banat unrest was widespread. Unruly, widely attended meetings of Magyar students and workers were held in and around Romania's "Autonomous Magyar Region," in which speakers expressed their support for the efforts of the revolutionaries in Hungary.⁶⁸⁴ But unlike in Czechoslovakia, in Romania the dissent was not confined to the Hungarian minority. On October 27, demonstrations made up in large part by Romanian-speaking students broke out in Bucharest, Iasi, Cluj, and Timosoara, where the loudest demand was for the abolition of compulsory Russian classes in schools and universities. In addition, workers, particularly in Bucharest, joined the demonstrations, with unrest most noticeable among the railwaymen.⁶⁸⁵ On October 30 the Romanian authorities placed the Timosoara, Oradea, and Iasi

682. Jean Chiama and Jean-François Soulet, Histoire de la dissidence: Opposition et révoltes en URSS et dans les démocraties populaires de la mort de Staline à nos jours (Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1982), p. 248.

683. Radványi, Hungary and the Superpowers, p. 12.

684. Ghita Ionescu, Communism in Rumania; 1942-1962 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 270.

685. Ibid., pp. 267-268. Also King, Minorities Under Communism, pp. 82-84. Other protests were scheduled to take place but were broken up by security police tipped off by student informants.

regions under special military jurisdiction and prohibited foreigners from entering either Transylvania or Moldavia. Even so, discontent among the population continued to mount. It was one indication of the anti-Soviet feeling prevailing in the country at the time that (at least according to one account) trains carrying fresh Soviet troops toward the border with Hungary were stopped by rail workers in Moldavia and in Grivita, near Bucharest.⁶⁸⁶ To an extent, though, these disturbances had begun before the Hungarian uprising, sparked by the same de-Stalinization push in Moscow that had subsequently helped destabilize Hungary and Poland.

There were incipient signs of unrest within the Soviet Union itself. Dissent within the "socialist Motherland" had always been an issue about which Soviet leaders were extremely sensitive. Opposition to the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia had taken years to wipe out, while dissent within areas occupied after World War II seemed still to simmer beneath the surface. A partisan Ukrainian resistance movement had struggled on well after the defeat of the Nazis, and although it received only token assistance from the West it was not fully mopped up until the mid-1950s. Yet in 1956, perhaps spurred on by Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign, substantial unrest began to resurface, as much within the Russian Republic as in the

686. Ionescu, Communism in Rumania, p. 268. The Dej regime apparently had angered railway officials by ordering them to service the trains. It is significant that disturbances took place among the railway workers, because the railway unions had always been one of Gheorghiu-Dej's strongest power bases.

territories of the ethnic minorities. An American assessment in early 1957 came to the following conclusion:

Events in Hungary and Poland, coming in the wake of the disillusionment and skepticism created by de-Stalinization, touched off the most audible protest against major Soviet policies in more than a decade. This protest was apparently confined primarily to student and intellectual circles. Numerous student meetings called for more information on events in Poland and Hungary and criticized domestic policies such as ideological controls and the unequal distribution of income.⁶⁸⁷

This estimate of dissent within the USSR probably hedges on the conservative side, since it makes no mention of unrest among Soviet workers, whereas it seems that news of change in the Bloc in fact had reached the average Russian. By early November, for instance, workers at the large Kaganovich plant in Moscow had gone on strike, demanding better working conditions as the price for returning to work,⁶⁸⁸ while murmuring on issues ranging from housing to salaries surfaced elsewhere in the Moscow area and in other regions of the USSR. In Lithuania, the largest of the three Baltic states forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940, public celebrations in November ostensibly to mark All-Souls day turned into nationalist demonstrations in which young people played the most prominent role. According to the Lithuanian press, demonstrations in Kovno and Vilna prompted at least two arrests (and it is likely that other detentions went

687. United States Department of State, Office of Intelligence Research, Review of Developments, 1956: Part 1. Soviet Internal Affairs, January 28, 1957, p. 4. UPA Microfilm Collection.

688. Chiama and Soulet, Histoire de la dissidence, p. 248.

unreported), and were apparently what Lithuanian Party Secretary Snechkyus was referring to when he told the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet in December that the uprising in Hungary had "emboldened" anti-Soviet elements to "raise their heads" in "socialist" Lithuania.⁶⁸⁹ Interestingly, on November 8, Khrushchev felt sufficiently threatened by the signs of dissent to deliver a major speech to the Moscow Komsomol against ideological deviation among students. A full-scale effort to tighten educational controls in the Soviet Union followed, with "rotten elements" and "demagogues" denounced in the press, and students and professors who revealed "unhealthy tendencies" dismissed from universities.⁶⁹⁰

It is not clear precisely to what extent the Soviet leadership was able to foresee at the end of October the repercussions within the Soviet Union that the Hungarian events would produce, but given the KGB's sensitivity to internal dissent, the Politburo must have had good reason to believe that success on the Hungarians' part in freeing themselves of Communist rule would seriously damage the stability of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the single most important reason why the Soviet leadership made the decision to intervene in Hungary was

689. United States Department of State, Office of Intelligence Research, Dissidence in the USSR, December 10, 1957, p. 10. UPA Microfilm Collection. Snechkyus mentioned the turmoil in Hungary as a source of the problem, although Lithuania's large Catholic population was no doubt affected by events in next-door Poland (as in 1981) as well.

690. United States Department of State, Office of Intelligence Research, Review of Developments in 1956, p. 4. UPA Microfilm Collection.

because the opportunity for intervention was available. The fear in Moscow of the effect which the fall from power of Hungarian Communism would have had on the rest of the Bloc, or as a precedent potentially affecting similar future crises to Soviet detriment, might not in itself have caused Khrushchev and his colleagues to have ordered the invasion of November 4, had several other factors not also been present. Among these factors were Imre Nagy's inability to unite together the various groups which had led the fight against Gerő, Hungary's relatively small population and military forces, and the availability of Hungarian Communists prepared to participate in a Soviet-installed regime. More important than any of these points, however, was the fact that the Western powers, particularly the world's leading atomic power, the United States, were not prepared to take up the Hungarians' cause in any effective fashion. The Eisenhower Administration's disinclination to play any role in Hungary would eventually have become apparent enough, but the various reassurances made to Moscow between October 27 and October 30 were earlier and more decisive signals to the Kremlin of American non-involvement than would otherwise have been available. The Soviet leadership was quite aware that meaningful action in Hungary's defense on the part of the other NATO members would be impossible without American backing, all the more so given the Suez disaster. The spectacle of the United States working vigorously to line up votes against France and Britain in the United Nations on October 29 and 30 could not have failed to signal to the Kremlin leaders that despite the Americans' nuclear

advantages and past stated commitments to liberating Eastern Europe, the opportunity for a massive Soviet intervention in Hungary had arrived. The waverers in the Politburo, Leninists who understood the importance of seizing the initiative, would not have been able to rebut this line of thinking.

It is my view that the Soviet decision to intervene was taken on October 31, and that as Khrushchev told Micunovic, by that point the decision was probably unanimous. What cannot be true, however, is Malenkov's remark that unanimity had prevailed at every stage of the decision-making process in Moscow. Had this been the case, then a definitive Soviet position toward the Hungarian Revolution would have been promulgated from the start. Instead, the image conveyed from Soviet officials during the first week of the Revolution was one of vacillation, if not acquiescence. According to Arkady Shevchenko, a Soviet Foreign Ministry official at the time, one of the officers in the Soviet Embassy in Budapest in 1956 told him that "before and during the critical days of the [Hungarian] uprising Moscow's instructions were sometimes confusing and occasionally betrayed a lack of understanding of what was really going on."⁶⁹¹ Moreover, during the first few days after October 24, the Soviet troops in Hungary were issued very little ammunition and were then never resupplied, suggesting that the Soviet command in Hungary had not been instructed to prepare their forces for a second

691. Arkady Shevchenko, Breaking With Moscow (New York: Knopf, 1985), p. 80. There have been questions about parts of Shevchenko's book, but I see no reason to doubt him on this point.

intervention.⁶⁹² To the extent that a Soviet position toward the Revolution was determined at the outset, it was not hostile to the Nagy regime. Indeed, Nagy and his advisors were more worried about the pro-Rákosi, pro-Gerő officials who still dominated the Hungarian Communist Party than about a Soviet invasion. From Nagy's perspective, Khrushchev's commitment to de-Stalinization and toleration of reform in Eastern Europe would carry the day. Only the week before, Gomulka had been accepted as the Polish First Secretary, and Mikoyan and Suslov had given Nagy their full support during their visit to Budapest on October 25.

Looking at the problem from Moscow's vantage point, on the other hand, the Soviet leadership seems not to have given Nagy its blessing as much as to have decided to make virtue of necessity and use these first confused days in Hungary to take a closer evaluation of the options available. It was toward the end of this period, specifically on October 30 and 31, that it seems the contentiousness within the Politburo on how to deal with the uprising gave way to a consensus in favor of intervention. There is no doubt that the decision was made sometime before November 1, because that is the date on which Khrushchev, Malenkov, and Molotov traveled to Brest to inform the Poles of the plans.⁶⁹³ One interesting point to take into account in trying to assess exactly how long before November 1

692. See the account by Captain W. D. David, the Air Attaché at the time in the British Legation, "Hungary, 1956," in Fry, As Luck Would Have It, p. 114.

693. For a full account of Soviet relations with the other Communist regimes in this period, see the next section.

the Kremlin leadership decided to intervene is the claim attributed to Khrushchev that the decision was made without Mikoyan and Suslov, who were said still to have been in Budapest at the time.⁶⁹⁴ If true, the statement in Khrushchev Remembers would rule out the possibility that the commitment to intervene was made before Mikoyan and Suslov left for Budapest on October 30, whereas if the alternative had been true - if the decision to intervene had been made prior to the departure of Mikoyan and Suslov for Hungary - then the sole purpose of their trip would have been to deceive Nagy and his supporters. Although it is not too hard to imagine the Soviet leadership going to such extremes for the sake of deception, I do not believe it to have been the case here. Rather, it seems to me that on October 30 Khrushchev still was not certain that Soviet forces should be ordered to intervene and that he wanted a first-hand report on the situation on the ground in Budapest from Mikoyan. The report which he and Suslov then sent back to Moscow (in all likelihood by phone) no doubt confirmed the views of the Molotov faction, which Andropov probably had been arguing for some time.⁶⁹⁵ It was only after

694. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, p. 419. Michael Fry and Condoleezza Rice believe that "there are grounds to question" Khrushchev's memory on this point, but they do not let us know just what those grounds are. Fry and Rice, "The Hungarian Crisis of 1956," p. 90. In my view, however, it is more than likely that the decision was indeed made prior to the emissaries' return to Moscow, and not once they had returned, if only to deceive the Hungarians. But there were other sound reasons as well.

695. Mikoyan and Suslov might also have used this opportunity to meet with Ferenc Münnich, from whom they would have learned that János Kádár was prepared to defect. This might not yet have been known to the Soviet Embassy. If, as has been

Mikoyan's report had been received, it seems to me, that the leadership in Moscow made its decision to order a military intervention in Hungary a few days hence.

Moreover, there is no reason why Mikoyan and Suslov need have been present in Moscow when that final decision was taken. Since Mikoyan and Suslov seem to have represented opposing factions within the Politburo, they could be expected to have concurred in any matter on which Khrushchev and Molotov had already come to an agreement (nor would it have been wise for either Mikoyan or Suslov not to do so). Yet this does not mean that Mikoyan and Suslov were necessarily informed of the decision while they were still in Hungary - they may well not have been, in order better to give Imre Nagy the impression that he still enjoyed Moscow's backing. Or they might have been told of the decision but given instructions not to permit Imre Nagy to become aware of it.⁶⁹⁶ Implicit in such a directive would have been an order to agree to whatever Nagy requested (presuming it had some credibility), which would explain Suslov's approval of Nagy's request to bring more non-Communists into the Hungarian leadership. These were precisely the instructions which Andropov

suggested in this paper, the Imre Mezö affair of October 30 played a role in the decision on the part of Kádár and others to go over to the Soviet side, then Mikoyan's visit may well have been the point at which Kádár's willingness to defect first became known to Moscow.

696. Whether informed of the decision while still in Hungary or not, Mikoyan and Suslov could not have been surprised by it. The Politburo already had been seriously debating intervention prior to their departure, and they could have had no doubts as to what the impact of their report would be.

was given, either on October 31 or November 1: he was to agree to whatever Nagy demanded, including negotiations concerning the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary, while simultaneously trying to entice leading Hungarian figures into changing sides.

In this context, one must ask whether the apparently conciliatory oft-cited Soviet declaration in Pravda on October 31 was a genuine manifestation of Khrushchev's efforts to resolve the crisis peacefully or only the earliest case of deception in the Soviet leadership's strikingly nefarious method of defeating the Revolution. The article, and particularly its dramatic delivery to Imre Nagy on October 30 by two of the top members of the Soviet leadership, seemed to convey Soviet determination to let the Hungarians work out their own problems. Not surprisingly, therefore, it was welcomed in Budapest, Warsaw, and the Western capitals. If it was a piece of political deception, then the document must be considered a masterpiece, for it lulled the Nagy regime into a shortlived sense of security while at the same time convincing many observers in the West of Moscow's "moderation." But the sharp contrast between what the October 30 Declaration called for and what in fact took place on November 4 and after does not prove that the Declaration was disinformation from the start. Rather, it is possible that the Declaration was ordered prepared (almost certainly a few days before its publication) by the faction within the Soviet leadership which initially was considering accepting the Hungarian Revolution as a fait accompli and even carrying out some form of military withdrawal. Whether sponsored by the Khrushchev or Malenkov

factions, the Declaration thus might originally have been drawn up with the most sincere of intentions.⁶⁹⁷ By the time that Mikoyan and Suslov were dispatched back to Budapest, however, Khrushchev apparently was already quite close to agreeing with Molotov and Voroshilov that only military intervention could save the Soviet position in Eastern Europe. It is entirely conceivable, then, that on October 30 Khrushchev ordered the Declaration published in Pravda with the knowledge that if, as was becoming increasingly likely at that point, Soviet forces would soon overthrow the Nagy regime, then the Declaration might help keep the Hungarians off guard. The necessary military preparations would take several days, and it would be quite useful, Khrushchev might well have reasoned, to deceive Imre Nagy in the meantime. But whether it had been the Soviet leadership's original intent or not, it is certain that between October 31 and November 4 the Pravda statement was used to try to deceive the Nagy regime. On November 1, for instance, Andropov answered Nagy's protest of new Soviet deployments in Hungary by glibly telling the Hungarian Premier not only that the purpose of the new troops was merely to safeguard the withdrawal of the Soviet forces already in Hungary (which he could scarcely have expected Nagy to believe), but also that the leadership in Moscow still

697. According to one account, for example, Khrushchev told Nagy over the phone as early as October 28 that a major policy statement had been drafted and that Mikoyan would shortly be bringing a copy. Barber, Seven Days of Freedom, p. 116. I feel that this was well before any final decision regarding intervention had been made in Moscow.

intended to abide by the October 30 Declaration.⁶⁹⁸ It is possible that because of this Declaration, or because of the combined effect of the Declaration and Mikoyan's assurances of October 30-31, Nagy continued to believe even after November 1 that there was still some chance that Khrushchev would indeed order a withdrawal from Hungary.

One of the most important components of the Soviet campaign to deceive Imre Nagy was the Soviet-Hungarian negotiations on the withdrawal of the Red Army from Hungary. There is no reason to believe that - in the absence of outside pressure - the Kremlin was prepared to order any form of military withdrawal after October 31 (whereas in the days before then, as has been argued, at least part of the Soviet leadership might have been thinking along such lines), because even as these talks were being held, military preparations for the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution were being finalized. One must wonder how Nagy could possibly have believed that these talks could ever have had a useful outcome, given that the Hungarian government was aware as early as November 1 that a Soviet invasion was imminent (and had declared its neutrality on that basis). It is ironic that although Andropov's efforts to deceive Nagy on and after November 1 regarding Soviet intentions were in the main unsuccessful, Nagy still allowed his negotiating team to walk into a KGB trap. Moreover, despite his own reports to Nagy on October 31 and November 1 of menacing Soviet military moves, Pál Maléter, the

698. Heltai, "International Aspects," p. 54.

leader of the Hungarian delegation, clearly felt that the Soviet side, led by General Mikhail Malinin, was negotiating in good faith; otherwise he would never have agreed to meet with Malinin at Soviet military headquarters at Tököl on November 3. In my view, the most important reason why Maléter was deceived was that Malinin himself had not been informed that the KGB was about to arrest the Hungarian delegation.⁶⁹⁹ Malinin was not such a polished actor that he could have carried on the negotiations all the while knowing that his Hungarian opposite numbers were shortly to be incarcerated and possibly shot, and in any case it is hard to believe that Serov would have trusted the Army with such a secret. Even if the KGB had planned the arrests well in advance, there would have been no need to risk the operation by letting Malinin in on it - and Serov could just as easily have decided to arrest Maléter on the spur of the moment, particularly since the apprehension of Maléter was not crucial to the success of the invasion. The question of Malinin's knowledge aside, though, the Maléter-Malinin negotiations were a highly successful, if cowardly, piece of deception worked against the Hungarians.

The role played by Malinin at Tököl, however malevolent its full extent might have been, underlines the importance of the role played throughout this crisis by the Red Army, not only in

699. Béla Király disagrees with this hypothesis. In his view, Malinin's rank would have required that he be fully informed. For Király's interview with the author, see Appendix I. János Radványi, on the other hand, believes that Malinin had not been informed. Appendix N.

Hungary but in Moscow as well. As was mentioned earlier, Khrushchev had maintained close ties with many Red Army leaders from his days on the Ukrainian front in World War II, and when in 1953 Khrushchev, together with his Politburo colleagues, sought to bring the security organs under more direct Party control, he called upon his most trusted military allies to detain Beria. During the rivalry with Malenkov from 1953 to 1955, Khrushchev again won the support of the Army, insisting that the Soviet Union must strive to catch the West in atomic weapons. Yet during the Hungarian crisis, Khrushchev remarked to the Yugoslavs that he was being criticized by the Army leaders for not having acted decisively enough against the Revolution. According to Micunovic's account of this conversation, these views were then being exploited by Khrushchev's opposition within the Politburo:

[Khrushchev] said that there were also internal reasons in the Soviet Union why they could not permit the restoration of capitalism in Hungary. There were people in the Soviet Union who would say that ... ever since they had come to power (and here Khrushchev used a coarse word to describe the present Soviet leaders), Russia had suffered the defeat and loss of Hungary. And this was happening at a time when the present Soviet leaders were condemning Stalin. Khrushchev said this might be said primarily by the Soviet Army, which was one of the reasons why they were intervening in Hungary.⁷⁰⁰

What Khrushchev did not mention to Tito, however, was whether this supposedly heightened Red Army interest in a military solution to the crisis in Hungary translated into a direct role for Marshal Zhukov or other top military officials in the Soviet

700. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, pp. 133-134. Micunovic's italics and parentheses.

decision-making process or whether Khrushchev's Politburo colleagues were merely taking account of a well-known view on the part of the Soviet military leadership. Until we come to possess a transcript of the Politburo deliberations we are unlikely to know the precise answer, but it is worth recalling that Zhukov was not simply another military hero and spokesman, but a Candidate member of the Politburo who would attain full Politburo membership soon after the Hungarian crisis. Zhukov was therefore bound to have been integrally involved in the Politburo deliberations, though his view need not have been decisive and he may well have been excluded from certain sessions. American Ambassador Bohlen felt that Zhukov might have argued for military intervention in Poland in lieu of Khrushchev's visit to Warsaw on October 19 but that he was overruled.⁷⁰¹ If true, this would confirm not only Zhukov's preference for the use of force in Hungary - presumably reflecting the view of the Soviet General Staff - but also the readiness of the Politburo to reject his advice when it saw fit.⁷⁰²

701. Bohlen, Witness to History, p. 409. One might therefore have expected Zhukov and Molotov to have worked together, but Zhukov's support for Khrushchev in June 1957, against the combined efforts of Molotov and Malenkov to oust him, would seem to suggest that this might not have been the case in October 1956.

702. There were several important reasons why the Red Army would not want to back down in Hungary, such as the implicit threat to Yugoslavia and Austria which would be all but eliminated by a withdrawal. The occupation of Hungary was also useful for intimidating the Italians, whose territory was within easy range of bombers from Hungarian airfields. Béla Király has even claimed that "Zhukov threatened to resign if Hungary was not reoccupied as a site for missile

A divergent view is suggested by former GRU Colonel Oleg Penkovskiy, who was arrested in 1962 after turning over to American and British intelligence highly valuable information on Soviet military procedures, plans, and operations. Penkovskiy contends, though he makes this point only in passing, that in 1956, "We in Moscow felt as if we were sitting on a powderkeg. Everyone in the General Staff was against the 'Khrushchev adventure'" in Hungary. The predominant view among knowledgeable Soviet officers was that "it was better to lose Hungary ... than to lose everything."⁷⁰³ This account is in complete contradiction to Khrushchev's portrayal of a Red Army leadership eager to smash the Hungarians, and leads one to suspect that Khrushchev's claim to Tito that the Soviet military was straining

bases." See Király, "Military Aspects," p. 69. Also Király's interview with the author, Appendix I.

There were also very substantial uranium ore deposits in Hungary, which Soviet workers had been mining. The mines were officially known as "bauxite development projects." See V. Winston, "Captive Country Uranium: Hungary," Radio Free Europe Research Report, February 12, 1957.

703. Oleg Penkovskiy, The Penkovskiy Papers (New York: Avon Books, 1966), p. 213. At the time of the Hungarian crisis Penkovskiy was in the process of returning from a mid-level assignment in Turkey. It was not until 1960 that he assumed a position in which he was attached to the General Staff of the Army. Yet Penkovskiy's close acquaintance with many of the top officers in Soviet Military Intelligence and on the General Staff, not to mention the confirmed importance of the information which he passed to the West in 1961 and 1962 (according to Peer De Silva, for example, the data which Penkovskiy supplied was "intelligence of the highest caliber." De Silva, Sub Rosa, The CIA and the Uses of Intelligence, p. 142.) suggests that his view should be given quite a bit of weight.

On the other hand, at least one account maintains that Penkovskiy was a Soviet plant. See Pincher, Too Secret Too Long.

to attack was made only to mask Khrushchev's own determination - by that point no longer in question - to smash the uprising. Penkovskiy went on to say that it was only the reluctance or inability on the part of the Western powers to stand up to Khrushchev which allowed the Soviet leadership to make the determination that intervention could be safely undertaken, and although he somewhat overstates his claim, this is still an apt assessment.⁷⁰⁴ Interestingly, Penkovskiy's insistence that the Soviet General Staff was reluctant to intervene in Hungary is paralleled by the testimony of Jan Sejna, formerly Chief of Staff to the Czech Minister of Defense, who claims that the Czech Party leadership was also convinced that Hungary had been lost and that the risks involved in intervention were too great.⁷⁰⁵ Furthermore, if the remarks of one of the Soviet commanders in Hungary, General Pavel Ivanovich Batov, can be taken as truthful, even Zhukov was concerned about possible American involvement in Hungary. On the night of October 23/24 Zhukov was said to have phoned Batov with an order to commit his forces quickly, before

704. "If the West had slapped Khrushchev down hard then, he would not be in power today and all of Eastern Europe could be free." Ibid. Penkovskiy might have been exaggerating the General Staff's concerns, but he was correct to point out how American policy manifested weakness and therefore played into the hands of the most adventurous Soviet faction.

705. See Sejna's interview with the Oral History Project, International Security Studies Program, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy; Washington, DC, July 1985. According to Sejna's memoirs, however, General Boykov, the Czech Defense Ministry's "senior Soviet advisor," never doubted that Soviet forces would crush the Revolution. Sejna, We Will Bury You, p. 39. Apparently Boykov, at least, did not share the doubts which Penkovskiy claims that his superiors did.

any American incursion into Hungary could be launched: "If you don't get in there fast," Zhukov was reported to have said, "then you're going to find yourself up against Americans there."⁷⁰⁶ While it seems rather implausible that Zhukov, who like Khrushchev was able to take the measure of Eisenhower and Dulles at Geneva, genuinely expected an American military incursion into Hungary (particularly as early as October 24), the poor performance of Soviet forces over the following few days could only have increased whatever anxiety might have existed within the Soviet General Staff that the United States would be tempted to become involved. It would seem, then, that Khrushchev was probably exaggerating the degree of sentiment among the Red Army's leaders in favor of intervention in order to help justify after the fact a decision that the Soviet Politburo had been reluctant to make. Alternatively, he could have been trying to disguise what perhaps might have been a prominent role by Zhukov alone as the will of the military as a whole.

Although the Red Army naturally remained at all times the tool of the Soviet political leaders, the military leadership did not wait until October 31 (to continue the hypothesized timetable suggested above) before issuing any precautionary orders to its commanders in the field regarding Hungary. As early as the beginning of October reinforcements had been crossing from the Soviet Union into Romania to bolster the Soviet forces there opposite Hungary, while during the first days of the Nagy regime

706. Irving, Uprising!, p. 340. Irving interviewed Batov in Moscow.

authorization had been given for the deployment into Hungary of fresh army divisions from the Carpathian military district of the USSR. The Soviet leadership may not have decided until October 31 to intervene, but in the interim it would take no chances: Molotov, Malenkov, and Khrushchev could all agree that prudence called for the prepositioning of whatever forces were necessary to keep all options open. Soviet Marshals were told to be ready to crush the Hungarians if the signal were given, which turned out to be only a few days later. To an extent, however, Konev and Zhukov no doubt anticipated this request and made sure that their forces were ready for every contingency even before Khrushchev's final orders were given. Still, whatever steps the Army took before October 31 to ready a military assault on Hungary were only precautionary. If the more cautious faction in the Soviet Politburo had prevailed during this crisis, then the massive military operation which in the end took place on November 4, 1956 would have been delayed, perhaps indefinitely.

The second and decisive Soviet intervention in Hungary was therefore not an instantaneous reaction to a deteriorating situation, but a difficult decision that was made only after long deliberations and prolonged debate between Politburo factions. Khrushchev's power and prestige was hurt immensely by the crisis, and the strength of the Malenkov/Molotov alliance grew to such an extent that by June 1957 they were able to launch a nearly successful coup against Khrushchev. For the states of the Warsaw Pact, whose leaders had been consulted by Malenkov and Khrushchev only after the decision to intervene had already been made (see

below), the period after November 1956 was characterized by a retreat from de-Stalinization that left would-be reformers little room for maneuver. While Ulbricht, Novotny, and Zhivkov enjoyed new appreciation from Moscow for their doctrinaire regimes, Gomulka was gradually coopted back into the Communist mainstream and Gheorghiu-Dej was granted his wish of Soviet troop withdrawal only at the price of tight control at home. In Hungary, János Kádár's quisling regime was viewed with undisguised contempt by the population, a stigma which it would not begin to erase for over a decade. Meanwhile, Moscow's ability to enjoy a free reign in Hungary boded ill for Western hopes of seeing Communist expansion halted and reversed. Successive Soviet regimes would feel confident and unchallenged enough to reassert again their commitment to defending the doctrine of the irreversibility of Communist gains - that concept which in practice brings instability and danger to the international system.

The Revolution and the Communist Bloc

In making their decision whether to intervene in Hungary, the Soviet leaders took into account the views of the Bloc's other Communist regimes. Of the rulers consulted, some went out of their way to urge intervention in Hungary, others merely accepted the Soviet rationale, and with the possible exception of Gomulka's group in Poland, none registered any meaningful objection to the proposed suppression of the Hungarian Revolution. However, the decision which the men in the Kremlin reached by October 31 was not based on the views of their

colleagues in the "fraternal" ruling Parties. Rather, the decision to intervene was made as soon as each of the Soviet leaders perceived that it was in his own interest, and in the interest of the CPSU, to do so. There is little doubt that the Molotov faction within the Soviet leadership pointed to the views of the Romanian, Czech, and East German regimes in supporting its insistence upon intervention, while Khrushchev and Mikoyan might well have reminded the Politburo of the (initial) wait-and-see approach on the part of the Yugoslavs and Chinese in urging the Politburo to take a cautious approach during the first few days of the uprising. But there is no reason to believe that any of the Bloc leaders - the Chinese included - genuinely had any influence over the Soviet deliberations. On the contrary, those regimes were for the most part excluded from the debate and were informed of the decision only once it had been taken.

Nevertheless, each of the protagonists within the Soviet Politburo found it useful to be able to draw upon support from other Communist leaders, and the most important potential such source was the leadership of the People's Republic of China. With the death of Stalin, Mao Tse-tung was left as the Communist "senior statesman," a man whose blessing was sufficiently valuable that both Malenkov and Khrushchev competed to attain it. This attention to the Chinese on the part of the Soviet leadership came despite a long rivalry between the CPSU and the Communist Party of China. Stalin had always preferred to deal with Chiang Kai-shek rather than with Mao, had done his best to sabotage the Communist efforts to prevail over the Nationalists,

and had subsequently belittled the Chinese "model" of Communism. Although Stalin's successors were uneasy that China was beyond their domination, they turned to Mao for support in their struggles against each other as well as for ideological backing against challenges from within the Bloc. But in return for supporting various protagonists in the struggle for power within the Soviet leadership, Mao exacted a price: greater influence for China within Communist affairs. By July 1955 Khrushchev and Mikoyan had succeeded in wooing Mao away from their rivals and drew upon visits with the Chinese to blast Molotov at the CPSU Plenum,⁷⁰⁷ while at the same time, emissaries from the PRC expanded their presence in Eastern Europe and quietly encouraged leading actors there to try taking positions more independent of Moscow. Mao found Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign to be highly useful (though he later condemned it), since admissions of Soviet fallibility strengthened the Chinese position within the Bloc with respect to the Soviet Union and helped promote the principle of diversity among Communist states. When Polish Party Secretary Edward Ochab visited Peking at the head of a large Polish delegation to the Chinese Party Congress of September 1956, for example, he was given discreet support for more autonomous policies.⁷⁰⁸ It seems almost certain that confidence

707. Ra'anan, The USSR Arms the Third World, pp. 88-89.

708. Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence, p. 583. According to a recent interview with Ochab, the Chinese arranged for the Polish delegation's airplane to develop a problem, in order that they could speak with Ochab without the Soviet ambassador present (he had left the airport assuming that the Poles were on their way). Ochab said that the Chinese

on the part of Gomulka's supporters in the Polish Party that they had the support of the Chinese helped them stand up to Khrushchev in October.⁷⁰⁹ Chou En-lai was widely believed by many Poles to have encouraged Khrushchev to accept Gomulka, and during his visit to Warsaw in January 1957 Chou claimed - though this does not prove it was true - that the Chinese leadership "had opposed the Soviet proposal to intervene in Poland and [had] asserted that the Poles, even if they go astray, should find their own solutions to their own problems."⁷¹⁰ The Poles took Chou at his word, and Ochab later revealed that he was "convinced that ... if China hadn't sent its warning [to Moscow] in time there would have been an intervention in Poland, and then you could have put flowers on my grave."⁷¹¹

The outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution presented the Chinese leaders with a dilemma. While they welcomed policies on the part of Communist states which reflected independence of the

seemed "very well disposed towards our problems." See Ochab's interview with Teresa Toranska, in Toranska, "Them: Stalin's Polish Puppets", trans. Agnieszka Kolakowska (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), p. 68.

709. See Harold C. Hinton, China's Turbulent Quest: An Analysis of China's Foreign Relations Since 1949 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1972), pp. 80-81. Also Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc, p. 260. In conversations he held on visits to Warsaw in 1957 and 1958 with top Polish Party officials, Brzezinski was told of Chinese support for Gomulka.

710. Ochab interview with Toranska. Toranska, "Them," p. 70. Similarly, in 1960 Chou told a visiting Polish delegation that the Chinese "had helped" Gomulka in 1956. Chou did not elaborate, but he seemed to have been believed.

711. Ibid., p. 70.

Soviet Union, and while they were not eager to see the whims of the Kremlin imposed by force, they were nonetheless no readier than their counterparts in Moscow to see Communism dislodged from power anywhere. Like the men in the Kremlin, the Peking regime derived its legitimacy from the doctrine of the irreversible spread of Communism and the need to safeguard that process against the tools of "imperialism and reaction." Yet in truth - and despite claims by Chinese spokesmen in later years that Mao had been instrumental in bringing about the Soviet invasion of November 4 - Chinese policy at the time of the Hungarian revolt was handicapped by precisely the same cautiousness and wavering as characterized the Soviet response between October 24 and October 31.

Following what was alleged in Khrushchev Remembers to have been a request by the Soviet leadership at the height of the Hungarian crisis, a delegation from the PRC arrived in Moscow, led by Mao's top lieutenant, Liu Shao-chi. According to Khrushchev Remembers, Liu and his team joined the debate among the Soviet leaders, who then spent all night (if true, probably the night of October 30/31) changing their minds back and forth, and by daybreak decided not to intervene in Hungary. All this supposedly took place with frequent telephone calls by Liu back to China to receive Mao's approval for the delegation's moves.⁷¹² This account makes no mention of any Chinese insistence on smashing the "counter-revolution" (as was later claimed by

712. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, p. 418.

Peking), and in that respect is most likely accurate. Moreover, the emphasis on indecision and wavering also strikes me as a reflection of the true state of affairs in the Kremlin at the time. Khrushchev Remembers then goes on to explain how the Soviet leaders finally reversed themselves and settled on intervention after all, thoughtfully informing their Chinese guests of that fact at the last possible minute:

After long deliberation, the Presidium decided that it would be unforgivable, simply unforgivable, if we stood by and refused to assist our Hungarian comrades ... So it was decided. But Liu Shao-chi was supposed to fly to Peking that same evening, and he still thought we had agreed not to apply military force in Hungary. We thought we should inform him that we had reconsidered our position ... The entire Presidium went out to the airport. Liu and his comrades arrived, and we had our meeting ... Liu agreed that our revised decision to go ahead and send in the troops was right. "I can't get Comrade Mao Tse-tung's consent at this moment," he said, "713 But you may assume that you have our backing."

This account is noteworthy chiefly for its belittling of any Chinese contribution to the decision to intervene. Here we have Mao's top deputy being informed of the Soviet leaders' final decision just as he was about to leave the country, a "bon voyage" reminder that his presence had not been necessary for reaching a conclusion. Khrushchev Remembers was published in 1970, at the peak of the Sino-Soviet rivalry, and the chapter on Hungary was probably written in part to refute the claim on the part of the Chinese that it was only their arguments in favor of crushing the Revolution which convinced the Soviet leaders to move against the Hungarians.

713. Ibid., pp. 418-419.

In the Chinese version of the events, Liu gets credit for the decision to intervene. In September 1963 the government organ Peking Review published a document covering many issues over which Moscow and Peking were then feuding, and included the following statement:

... at the critical moment when the Hungarian counter-revolution had occupied Budapest, for a time it [the leadership of the CPSU] intended to adopt a policy of capitulation and abandon Hungary to counter-revolution ... We insisted on the taking of all necessary measures to smash the counter-revolutionary rebellion in Hungary and firmly opposed the abandonment of socialist Hungary.⁷¹⁴

If the Chinese account is true, then much of what is asserted in Khrushchev Remembers is not, beginning with the claim that the Soviet leadership "asked" the Chinese to send a delegation. For Peking Review's version to have been accurate, Mao and his colleagues would have had to have been demanding action almost from the outset and would have had to have been urging the Soviet Politburo to accept immediately a delegation from Peking. Furthermore, the Liu mission would have had to have been an all-out effort from the start to convince the Soviet leadership to intervene, not the passive player in the talks that is portrayed in Khrushchev Remembers; and Liu could never have finished the talks approving (what was at the time) a decision not to intervene.

714. "The Origin and Development of the Differences Between the Leadership of the CPSU and Ourselves - Comment on the Open Letter of the Central Committee of the CPSU," Peking Review, September 13, 1963.

Which version, then - the Soviet or the Chinese - is true? Perhaps neither. First of all, despite the contention in Khrushchev Remembers that Liu Shao-chi played an insignificant role in the decision to use force in Hungary, one must note that even in this pro-Soviet account it is fully conceivable that Liu could have been arguing in favor of intervention all along, as the Chinese contend. How else, one might ask, could Liu have agreed at the last minute to the reversed decision - and without checking with Mao - if intervention had not been the position which the Chinese had favored all along? The inclusion in Khrushchev Remembers of the (alleged) fact that Liu did not in the end need to consult with Peking might thus be a tacit admission on the part of the Soviet side that the Chinese had indeed been arguing for intervention.

The problem with this hypothesis, however, is that there is very good reason to believe that, as in the case of the Polish Communist challenge to Khrushchev, the Chinese supported the Revolution in Hungary, at least during its initial stages. In Budapest, for example, Ho Te-ching, the PRC's Ambassador to Hungary, met with Imre Nagy and left Nagy with the impression that China was sympathetic to the Hungarians' struggle. According to George Heltai, who met with Nagy immediately after the meeting between Nagy and Ho, the Chinese Ambassador gave "the impression that he was in favor of the Revolution, and that in his reports he would certainly urge Mao to support us," although Heltai admitted that Ho had not explicitly pledged China's

support.⁷¹⁵ Similarly, János Radványi (head of the Far Eastern Division in the Hungarian Foreign Ministry following the Revolution) was told many years later by the Press Attaché of the PRC's Embassy in Budapest in 1956 that the Embassy "supported Imre Nagy for some time, seeing in him a Communist opposition to Soviet 'great power chauvinism.'"⁷¹⁶ Thirdly, Mao was quick to make known Chinese support for the principles contained in the Soviet Declaration of October 30: on November 1, a statement was released in Peking which said that the government of the PRC viewed the October 30 Declaration in Pravda "to be correct" and added that the Declaration was "of great importance in correcting errors in mutual relations between the socialist countries and in strengthening unity among them." More to the point:

The government of the People's Republic of China notes that the people of Poland and Hungary ... have raised

715. See Heltai's interview with the author, Appendix F. This meeting did not take place until November 1, though, by which point (see below) the Chinese were already withdrawing their support from Nagy. Ho's ties to Mao might well have been more extensive than could normally have been expected. János Radványi (Appendix N) told me that Mao and Ho may have known each other from the time of the Long March, that Ho was "personally close" to Foreign Minister Ch'en Yi, and that during Radványi's visit with Mao in 1959, Mao "spoke glowingly about Ho's reporting during the crisis in Hungary."

716. According to Radványi, the Chinese withdrew their support for Nagy only after the Mezõ affair, on October 30. See Appendix N. Ho's intelligence network was reputed to be among the best informed in Budapest. The Cultural Attaché, for instance, spoke fluent Hungarian and kept in touch with the country's dissident intellectuals as well as key figures in the (predominant) Gerõite faction of the Party. Correspondents of the New China News Agency and the students on exchange programs from the PRC reported regularly to Ho on the activities of the Petõfi Circle and at the universities. Radványi, Hungary and the Superpowers, p. 21.

demands that democracy, independence, and equality be strengthened and the material well-being of the people be raised ... These demands are completely proper. Correct satisfaction of these demands is not only helpful to consolidation of the people's democratic system in these countries but also favorable to unity among the socialist countries.⁷¹⁷

It is possible, of course, that the Chinese statement of November 1, like the Soviet Declaration of October 30, may have been intended to deceive the Hungarians. I consider this somewhat unlikely, however, if only because the Declaration in Pravda appeared at the time to represent a major break from earlier Soviet positions on intra-Bloc relations, whereas the Chinese statement of November 1 was completely consistent with Peking's positions prior to that point. Even after Nagy had been deposed, Chinese policy continued to place great importance on each ruling Party's right to run its own affairs: although the Chinese were quick to endorse Kádár, Chou En-lai's visit to Warsaw in January 1957 was a reminder that like Gomulka, the regime in Peking had its own goals, which might not be identical

717. The Chinese statement of November 1, 1956, is reprinted in David Floyd, Mao Against Khrushchev: A Short History of the Sino-Soviet Conflict (New York: Praeger, 1963), pp. 240-241. My italics. The view that the PRC initially supported the Hungarian Revolution and even argued against intervention in discussions with the Russians has been articulated as well in Irving, Uprising!, p. 443., and Gati, "Imre Nagy & Moscow," p. 48. Unfortunately, neither author gives his sources for this claim.

George Heltai also believes that the Chinese - despite their later insistence to the contrary - supported Imre Nagy. "The Hungarian Revolution," Heltai told the author, "like the rise of Gomulka in Poland, was exactly what the PRC favored - Communism in power but without being controlled by Moscow. They had acknowledged as much in the case of the Poles." See Appendix F.

to those in Moscow.⁷¹⁸ In the same vein, despite the uprising in Hungary it was asserted in a major article in Peking's People's Daily on December 29, 1956, that each Communist regime must apply Marxism-Leninism depending on the "special national features" of that country.⁷¹⁹ It seems, then, that the claim in Peking Review in 1964 that the Chinese played an instrumental role in convincing Khrushchev to intervene in Hungary was intended to obscure the fact that the Chinese leadership was as unsure as their Soviet counterparts in 1956 as to what course to take regarding the Revolution, although in my estimation the inference in Khrushchev Remembers that Liu Shao-chi played a trivial role was probably intended more as a contemporary slap against the Chinese than as a clarification of the historical record.

The article in Peking Review in 1964 was not the only post facto effort on the part of the Chinese leadership to try to portray themselves as the principal instigators of the Soviet intervention. In 1957, Ho Te-ching tried to convince Radványi that before he met with Nagy on November 1 he had already "asked Peking to put pressure on the Kremlin for a second Soviet military action against Hungary," with the result alleged to be

718. See G. F. Hudson, "China Invades Europe," The New Leader 40 (no. 8, February 25, 1957): p. 6. Nor was Chinese articulation later in 1957 of the view that the Soviet Union was the "Head of the Socialist Camp" the deferential statement that it at first seemed. Khrushchev rightly saw it as a conditional, retractable assessment on the part of the PRC.

719. "More on the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," reprinted in Floyd, Mao Against Khrushchev, pp. 242-246.

that "Mao Tse-tung sent urgent messages to Khrushchev pressing for military action."⁷²⁰ Ho's remarks were primarily a retroactive effort to embellish his own role, because for the Chinese Embassy in Budapest in reality to have played a major part in bringing about the decision in Moscow to intervene, as Ho contended was the case, Ho would have had to have made his recommendation to Peking by October 27 or 28 - far earlier than he could plausibly have determined that Imre Nagy's policies would lead to the "restoration of capitalism." Nevertheless, it seems quite possible that by the time of his meeting with Imre Nagy on November 1, which took place after the Hungarian declaration of neutrality, or perhaps (as Radványi suggests) even as early as October 30, Ho might indeed have recommended to Peking the withdrawal of Chinese support for Nagy, but that would probably have come too late to affect the deliberations in Moscow. Although Ho could well have been dishonest with Nagy during their meeting, it is difficult to believe Ho's claim that the Chinese embassy in Budapest played an important role in bringing about Soviet intervention. Ho need not have made any recommendations at all to have known by November 1 that the decision to intervene had already been taken in Moscow, either because his embassy was informed by Peking of that fact, or

720. Radványi, Hungary and the Superpowers, p. 23., and interview with the author, Appendix N. In his book, Radványi seems to accept as accurate the claim that Ho encouraged Mao to push for intervention. In discussing the point with the author, though, Radványi made it clear that the only source for this claim was Ho's own account of the Revolution.

because he and his staff were at least as able to recognize that a Soviet military operation was imminent as were the Hungarians.

Another instance in which the Chinese tried to claim credit for the Soviet decision to intervene came about on May 5, 1959, when Mao Tse-tung told a visiting Hungarian delegation, led by Prime Minister Ferenc Münnich, that during the crisis in Hungary he "had sent an urgent message to the Kremlin asking Khrushchev for quick military action against the Hungarian revisionists."⁷²¹ Münnich was not inclined to dispute this (nor was he in a position to do so), preferring instead to express his gratitude to Mao, Liu Shao-chi, Chou En-lai, and the other Chinese present for their "economic and moral support" both in 1956 and in the years after, at which point Mao replied that on the contrary China owed Hungary great thanks for its service to the international Communist movement. Mao elaborated to the slightly puzzled Hungarians that without the experience of the uprising in Hungary in 1956, the Chinese Party would never have succeeded in identifying and isolating China's own "counter-revolutionaries" through the "Hundred Flowers" and "Rectification of Errors" campaigns between 1956 and 1957.⁷²² While it is unclear whether Mao's Hundred Flowers campaign was ever intended as a genuine call for freer expression or whether it was designed from the start to isolate Mao's opponents, there seems little reason to doubt Mao's declaration to the Hungarians in 1959 that the 1956

721. Radványi, Hungary and the Superpowers, p. 27. Radványi was part of this delegation.

722. Ibid., p. 28.

Revolution had alerted him to the need to crack down on dissent. On the other hand, the claim that Mao had urgently asked Khrushchev for "quick military action against the Hungarian revisionists" was wholly disingenuous, as was the assertion that in 1956 Mao had assured the Soviet leadership that the danger of American involvement was minimal, since the United States was only a "paper tiger," its nuclear capabilities notwithstanding.⁷²³ Each of these statements cost Mao nothing to make and was probably designed mostly to irritate Khrushchev, with whom the Chinese leadership was becoming increasingly disenchanted. Additionally, as with Ho Te-ching's earlier claimed prescience, Mao was doing his best to ingratiate himself with Kádár and Münnich - who were of course well aware of the extent to which Khrushchev had been prepared to accept Imre Nagy in 1956.⁷²⁴

The East European regimes played even less of a role in the Soviet decision to intervene than did the Chinese, although reports from East Berlin, Prague, and Bucharest of growing dissent among the population (probably intentionally exaggerated by the anxious Party leaderships there) could not have failed to

723. Ibid., p. 27.

724. Representatives of the PRC apparently claimed credit for the Soviet decision to intervene on at least one other occasion as well. During the conference of 81 Communist Parties in Moscow in November 1960, the Chinese were reported to have claimed to have "urged the Soviet leaders to repress the insurrection with force, at the moment when Khrushchev and Mikoyan were still inclined to deal with the insurgents and make concessions." Edward Crankshaw, in The Observer (London), February 12, 1961. Cited in Griffith, Communism in Europe, p. 243.

bolster the arguments of Molotov and his backers in favor of quick intervention. Once the decision to intervene had been made, however, Khrushchev found it necessary to inform each of the East European regimes in person of the Soviet decision. The Poles were the first to be informed, almost certainly because Khrushchev was most concerned about their reaction to the planned invasion. Gomulka and his supporters were worried that Soviet intervention in Hungary could bode ill for the survival of their own regime: it did not seem too far-fetched that the Soviet leadership might opt to kill two birds with one stone, once the threshold of using military force had been passed, or that Gomulka's adversaries in the Party, such as the Natolin faction, might be emboldened enough by the Soviet invasion of Hungary to seek to reverse the gains of the "Polish October." Even discounting these potential threats, though, the very precedent of relying on the Red Army to install Party leaders in Eastern Europe more to Moscow's liking than those locally selected was not something Gomulka and his colleagues were eager to see established. On the other hand, the Nagy government was also a cancer that if not speedily eradicated (no less drastic "cure" seemingly in sight), could threaten Gomulka's ability to pursue its own variety of reforms. Although it was a delicate issue to try to turn to his advantage, Gomulka must have realized as well that the Soviet move against the Hungarians was a useful reminder

to his more exuberant supporters of the constraints within which Polish reforms would have to take place.⁷²⁵

On November 1, Gomulka, Cyrankiewicz, Ochab and others in the Polish leadership were apparently summoned to the Soviet side of the border, at Brest-Litovsk, where the Politburo's appointed "troika of Khrushchev, Molotov, and Malenkov" met them.⁷²⁶ There, the Poles were informed of the Soviet intention to intervene in Hungary, and reacted with what is termed in Khrushchev Remembers as "strenuous objections."⁷²⁷ Micunovic concurs that Gomulka resisted the Soviet proposal, citing Khrushchev's account to Tito that "the Poles had ... their own views."⁷²⁸ In the end, however, the Polish leadership had no choice but to acquiesce in what was obviously Moscow's final decision. The fact that Khrushchev, Molotov, and Malenkov stood together reinforced the point that the major factions in the Soviet Party had come to a consensus on this matter and would not permit their erstwhile division to be exploited by the Poles or any other East European regime seeking its own ends in the crisis. At the same time, the presence of Molotov (of Molotov-Ribbentrop fame) in the Soviet delegation must have reminded the

725. This is a point raised by Brzezinski. Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc, p. 262.

726. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, p. 420. It seems odd that Khrushchev should refer to himself in the third person, but this is not the only case in which he seems to do so, nor the only idiosyncrasy in Khrushchev Remembers.

727. Ibid., p. 421.

728. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, p. 132.

Poles of the Kremlin's ability to use force in Poland as well. This seems to have been the Soviet leaders' intent, because Molotov returned to Moscow immediately after the meeting and did not continue on with Khrushchev and Malenkov.

In their discussion with the Poles, the Soviet leaders must have made their point, because apparently neither Gomulka nor any of his supporters, whom the Hungarian leaders believed were backing Imre Nagy, tipped Nagy off to the Soviet plans. Of course, it was on the same day that the Polish-Soviet talks were held that Nagy, Maléter, and Király determined in any case that a Soviet invasion was imminent, but they reached that conclusion solely on the basis of Hungarian intelligence on Soviet troop movements in and around Hungary. Moreover, they did not know precisely when the Red Army was planning to launch its invasion, information which would have been militarily and politically of the highest importance - particularly, one might have thought, if passed to the West in time. It must be noted, though, that it is not at all certain that Khrushchev told the Poles anything more specific than that an intervention in Hungary was going to take place. It was precisely because he was not considered fully reliable that Tito was not given the date of the proposed action, and Gomulka may well have been treated the same way. Imre Nagy and his advisors, for their part, felt that Gomulka was supporting them: according to George Heltai, who handled Hungary's foreign relations under Nagy, a representative of the Polish government phoned Nagy's office every day "to see how

things were going" and "how our cause was progressing."⁷²⁹ These supportive messages continued even after the hasty Soviet-Polish conference at Brest, but the caller never told the Hungarians that Khrushchev had met with Gomulka on November 1 or that the Soviet leadership had decided upon intervention.⁷³⁰ Nevertheless, on November 3, to quote Heltai, this

representative of the Polish leadership called us [again] and offered his government's wholehearted support for negotiations to revise the Warsaw Treaty. He offered Warsaw as a site for Hungarian-Soviet negotiations and for a meeting of all the members of the Warsaw Pact.⁷³¹

In retrospect, there seems little question that this communication was Gomulka's best effort to try to help the Hungarians out. Gomulka's intention was apparently to offer Nagy a purely Communist multilateral forum in which Hungarian and Soviet representatives could discuss their differences, which the Soviet leaders were no doubt expected to find more attractive than the request Nagy had made two days earlier to the United Nations that the Four Powers take up the question of the Soviet military presence in Hungary. If, as appears to be the case, the

729. See Heltai's interview with the author, Appendix F. Miklós Vásárhelyi (Appendix R) added that the Polish Ambassador to Hungary brought Nagy "a message of support" from Gomulka, and Endre Márton (Appendix M) claimed that the Poles flew medical supplies, blood, and food into Hungary.

730. Heltai emphasized to me that the caller might not himself have known that the Soviet leaders had met with Gomulka at Brest, but I find this implausible - unless the caller was only a low-level official (and Heltai maintained that he was not), in which case his messages would not have been authoritative anyway. Appendix F.

731. See Appendix F.

offer was genuine, then one must assume that Gomulka was ready to make the same proposal to Khrushchev - provided that Nagy was willing to participate in such negotiations (after all, he had already unilaterally withdrawn Hungary from the Pact). This would have been a daring and tremendously risky path for Gomulka to have taken, and if in truth it was his intention to present the Kremlin with this idea, it would reflect more courage on Gomulka's part than he has traditionally been accorded, given the subsequent course of Polish affairs. After all, the East German, Czech, and Romanian regimes could be counted on vehemently to oppose such negotiations. One can only speculate why Gomulka waited two days before making this offer, but it seems reasonable to presume that there must have been substantial opposition within the Polish leadership to this course of action.⁷³² It is

732. According to Brzezinski, Gomulka may already have been in formal contact with Nagy. He cites an "unconfirmed report" that at some (unspecified) point during the Revolution, two top Polish officials, M. Naszkowski (the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs) and Artur Starewic (a member of the Polish Central Committee) met with Nagy. See Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc, p. 262. But neither Heltai nor Vászrhelyi recalled any such meeting, and I strongly doubt one ever took place.

There were a number of reports in the West European press that Naszkowski and Starewic met with Mikoyan and Suslov in Budapest on October 30. The staff of the US Embassy in Warsaw even speculated that representatives of the other Bloc countries might have been present at these talks as well, and that the purpose of the meeting could have been to hear the Soviet arguments in favor of military intervention in Hungary. Foreign Service Despatch, USWarsaw 171, November 5, 1956. Archives 764.00/11-556. I don't accept this hypothesis, though, because the decision of whether to intervene was being made in Moscow, not in Budapest. Furthermore, Khrushchev hardly needed the Poles to fly to Hungary (of all places) if he desired to learn their views or if he was worried that they might divulge the plans to Nagy, since he could summon their Ambassador in

also not clear why - if he was willing to risk Khrushchev's anger with this proposal - Gomulka did not also instruct his subordinates to inform the Hungarians that the Soviet leadership had just met with them and were in the process of finalizing a massive military intervention.⁷³³

According to Miklós Vásárhelyi, one of Imre Nagy's closest advisors, Nagy decided at this point, presumably on the basis of the Polish request, to send a delegation under Geza Losonczy to Warsaw, "in order to negotiate the withdrawal of Hungary from the Warsaw Pact."⁷³⁴ As in Heltai's account of the Polish offer to Nagy, the Hungarian delegation was to be instructed to negotiate with all of the members of the Warsaw Pact, not just the Soviet side. Vásárhelyi went on to say, however, and this is potentially very important, that Nagy told Andropov on November 3 (the date is also consistent with Heltai's account) of his intention to send a negotiating team to Warsaw.⁷³⁵ If this is true, then it is probable that he also told Andropov that the Losonczy mission stemmed from a Polish initiative. This could possibly have been Moscow's first word of the proposed Warsaw

Moscow easily enough or send an emissary to Warsaw if necessary.

733. The Polish Ambassador in Budapest, for example, may have known more than he was willing to tell Nagy. On November 1, the day (by coincidence?) on which Khrushchev met with Gomulka at Brest, he phoned Endre Márton and, as a humanitarian gesture, said that "if there was trouble in Budapest," Márton and his wife should feel free to come to the Polish embassy for safety. See Appendix M.

734. See Vásárhelyi's interview with the author, Appendix R.

735. Appendix R.

negotiations, since there is no reason to believe that Gomulka had already presented the proposal to the Russians. If so, the fact that the Polish and Hungarian regimes had managed to get together without Soviet approval or knowledge to push for revisions in the Warsaw Treaty could not have been well received in the Kremlin, nor was the news that a top-level Hungarian delegation was about to depart for Poland likely to cause the Soviet leaders any regrets that Nagy was about to be removed. On the contrary, Khrushchev no doubt now felt all the more confident that the decision to intervene had been the necessary, if difficult, course to take.⁷³⁶

As is elaborated below, Khrushchev and Malenkov returned to Moscow on November 3 from their visit with Tito, and the attack on Hungary began the next morning, November 4. The most probable reason why the intervention commenced so soon after Khrushchev's return is of course that the decision to suppress the Revolution had been made by the Soviet leadership several days earlier, with the required military and KGB preparations having then been completed during Khrushchev's hectic two days of meetings in Eastern Europe.⁷³⁷ On the other hand, there is the possibility -

736. The Soviet leaders - whatever their factional allegiance - understood as clearly as the statesmen of any 19th century European imperial power that one of the elements of success to occupying several foreign countries was to keep the leaders of each country from dealing directly with each other. All communications, especially those of a political nature, would have to pass through the Metropol - in this case Moscow. Nagy and Gomulka seem to have broken this rule.

737. One should not forget that the success of the Soviet intervention of November 4 was facilitated not only by the

though I do not consider it that likely and I suggest it here only for the record - that although the decision to intervene in Hungary indeed had been made prior to the Brest and Brioni conferences, the specific date had not yet been set. It need not even have been predetermined that the intervention take place immediately upon Khrushchev's return from Yugoslavia. Rather, the plan as of October 31 may have been only that when Khrushchev and Malenkov returned to Moscow, the Soviet political and military leaders would then decide, perhaps as much for operational as for political reasons, on which date to attack. If this was the case, then none of the East European regimes would have been told on which date the intervention would take place.⁷³⁸ Perhaps Khrushchev was even prepared to delay the invasion if he did not receive the satellite leaders' support, though I highly doubt it; in any case, Khrushchev knew full well that only Gomulka or Tito might potentially balk at supporting him, and as it turns out only Gomulka did. Nonetheless, if by

use of massive military force but by thousands of arrests by Soviet and Hungarian secret police as well. It is not known exactly when Serov arrived in Hungary, but it is a good bet that he had already arrived there before Khrushchev's return to Moscow from Yugoslavia. After all, the arrest of Maléter took place several hours before the military operation began.

738. Although that could have been true anyway. I have assumed so far that whereas the Yugoslavs, and perhaps the Poles as well, were not informed of the timing of the planned Soviet military moves, Novotny and Gheorghiu-Dej were. Yet Khrushchev could just as easily have decided to keep all the East European regimes in the dark as far as details were concerned. The Soviet leaders could not have been certain that Nagy did not have supporters even in Prague or Bucharest.

November 3 - for whatever reason - it had not already been decided that the intervention would begin on the night of November 3/4, then the news from Andropov that Nagy had decided to send a delegation under Geza Losonczy to Warsaw, apparently at Gomulka's invitation, would certainly have prompted Khrushchev to order that the invasion take place immediately. The same reaction would no doubt have been elicited if the Soviet leaders had learned on November 3 that Nagy was planning to travel to New York himself to address the United Nations - a step which, from Khrushchev's perspective, might have forced the otherwise ambivalent and distracted Americans to pay attention to Hungary.⁷³⁹

In any case, upon the completion of the talks with Gomulka and his colleagues in the Polish Party leadership, Malenkov and Khrushchev flew on to Bucharest, while Molotov returned to Moscow. That Molotov should meet only with the Poles at first seems puzzling: after all, with the possible exception of the Yugoslavs, no other East European regime would be less eager than the Poles to meet with Stalin's right-hand man. The most probable explanation is that only with regard to the Polish leadership did Khrushchev and the others in the Kremlin feel that a display of Soviet unity was imperative. Apparently the Czechs, Bulgarians, and Romanians were not judged likely to try to exploit Soviet rivalries. One might also have thought that

739. According to Vásárhelyi, by November 3 this was precisely Nagy's intent, although it is not clear whether Nagy told this to Andropov as well.

Khrushchev would want to keep Molotov at his side during this crucial period, rather than leave him with free reign in Moscow (keep your friends close and your enemies closer, as the saying goes), but Khrushchev apparently found Malenkov's presence at his side sufficiently reassuring - suggesting, significantly, that Malenkov and Molotov might have taken the same anti-Khrushchev stance during the Soviet debate over Hungary. In Moscow, meanwhile, Marshal Zhukov and the other military leaders were sure to insist that what the Politburo had decided before Khrushchev's departure be carried out and that no major moves be made until his return. It is equally plausible that the Politburo had decided prior to the start of the diplomatic tour that Molotov should be present only at the Brest talks - in order to intimidate Gomulka - and that he should subsequently help plan the preparation for the intervention or assume some similarly important role that could be handled only by a top figure and only in the Soviet capital.

Once in Romania, according to both Khrushchev Remembers and Micunovic's Moscow Diary, Khrushchev and Malenkov met not only with Gheorghe-Dej, but also with Novotny and other figures in the Czech leadership, who had flown in from Prague.⁷⁴⁰ Not

740. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, p. 420., Micunovic, Moscow Diary, p. 132. In Khrushchev Remembers it is asserted that the Bulgarian leadership, including Zhivkov, was also present in Bucharest, whereas Micunovic claims that Khrushchev and Malenkov traveled on to Sofia to meet with the Bulgarians. In trying to resolve this discrepancy, I am inclined to doubt that Khrushchev would take the trouble to travel in person to Sofia at this point. Bulgaria was by any estimation a peripheral actor during the Hungarian crisis; if the Soviet leaders had felt that time permitted

surprisingly, Novotny welcomed the news that the Soviet regime had decided to crush the Nagy regime. The meeting in Bucharest was not Novotny's only dealings with the Soviet leadership in this period. On October 21, a CPSU Central Committee delegation led by Averki Aristov arrived in Prague ostensibly "to study the life and work of the Czechoslovak Party."⁷⁴¹ The true purpose of Aristov's mission was of course related to the turmoil in Poland and Hungary; as Micunovic recorded in his diary, "the Russians are rather afraid there may be trouble there [in Czechoslovakia]."⁷⁴² The Czech regime, for its part, was terrified that the changes underway in neighboring Poland and Hungary, amplified by Western propaganda from across the West German frontier, might encourage would-be Czech reformers to try to challenge the regime - which, after all, had no Soviet

making a fourth stop, I strongly believe that they would have gone to Prague, where there was much more to discuss than in Sofia.

741. The New York Times, October 22, 1956, p. 1., Time, October 29, 1956, p. 26. Aristov had risen to power independently of Khrushchev, but had been dropped from the Politburo with Malenkov's accession to the Premiership. In the following months, Khrushchev seems to have helped Aristov recover some of his lost authority, and at the July 1955 Plenum Aristov joined the Central Committee Secretariat. His domain included some degree of responsibility for Party cadres, demonstrated by the fact that at the Twentieth Party Congress of February 1956 he was head of the Credentials Committee - a highly important body in helping ensure Khrushchev's domination of the proceedings. See Conquest, Power and Policy in the USSR, p. 267.

742. Micunovic did not mention the presence of the Soviet delegation in Prague until his diary entry of November 3 (Micunovic, Moscow Diary, p. 142.), so it seems possible that Aristov may have stayed in Czechoslovakia for some time, perhaps as long as a week.

military forces in the country to call upon.⁷⁴³ Novotny recognized that of all the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the Czech government was in the most precarious position, should Nagy succeed. On the other hand, traditional Czech and (even more marked) Slovak antipathy toward the Hungarians and mistrust of the Poles, coupled with Novotny's effective mechanisms of repression, so far seemed to be keeping the lid on unrest in the country. Additionally, the fact the most serious agitation against the regime had originated among the ethnic Magyars of Slovakia was an event not likely (at least ceteris paribus) to attract Slovaks and Czechs to join. Anxious to be prepared for whatever steps might have to be taken, the Czechoslovak State Defense Council went into permanent session for the duration of the Hungarian crisis.⁷⁴⁴

Accordingly, the primary purpose of Aristov's mission was probably to determine how well the Czech leadership was succeeding in beating down the dissent which was beginning to surface, and to assure Novotny of Soviet support. Then, as the situation in Hungary deteriorated, Khrushchev seems to have decided, given Novotny's natural interest in seeing the Hungarian uprising suppressed, to use the Czechs to help Nagy's Hungarian

743. At one point during the Revolution, the Hungarian military attaché in Prague called George Heltai to say that in his opinion most Czechs wanted to follow the Hungarians' example and overthrow Novotny. See Heltai's interview the author, Appendix F.

744. See the interview with Jan Sejna conducted by the Oral History Project of the International Security Studies Program, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy; Washington, DC, July 1985.

opponents. In this respect, the Czechs in particular appear to have played an important role during the Revolution. It was on Czech territory, for example, that the Hungarian secret police, the AVH, was reorganized and prepared for the moment when the Nagy government would be overthrown. AVH men in Hungary were issued last-minute orders to make their way across the Czech frontier, where AVH units would be reassembled and further orders issued.⁷⁴⁵ Along the Czech bank of the Danube, loudspeakers were set up blaring anti-revolutionary slogans and propaganda across the river into Hungary,⁷⁴⁶ while it was via Czechoslovakia that Gerő and Hegedűs were reported in one account to have made their way to the Soviet Union.⁷⁴⁷ On October 27, in a precautionary move designed to intimidate Imre Nagy, the Czech armed forces were put on alert and "sizable forces" were reported dispatched to the Hungarian border, while Hungarian language anti-Nagy propaganda leaflets were printed in three Slovak cities and smuggled into Hungary.⁷⁴⁸ At the same time, Czech intelligence

745. Márton, The Forbidden Sky, p. 155. Time magazine speculated that Aristov's presence in Prague may have been "to make sure Moscow kept control of the secret police," which was an unusually good estimate. Time, October 25, 1956, p. 26.

746. Interview 8-M, Hungarian Refugee Project, Columbia University.

747. This source even implies that the whole trip to the Czech border took place inside a Soviet tank - hardly a comfortable experience for the one-time leaders of Hungary. See Ernst Nagy, "Crisis Decision Setting and Response: the Hungarian Revolution," National Security Affairs Monograph 78-1 (Washington, DC: National Defense University Defense Directorate, March 1978), p. 6.

748. Péter Gosztony, "The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 Viewed from Two Decades' Distance," p. 148. The three cities were

was ordered by the KGB to begin operations targeted against the Nagy regime; such operations were apparently run out of Bratislava.⁷⁴⁹ The Czechs soon opened a "Rezidentura" in Budapest, which collected intelligence on developments in Hungary and conducted operations against János Kádár's remaining opponents from the time of the Revolution until 1959.⁷⁵⁰

One of the most interesting favors for Moscow which has been attributed to Novotny is the claim made recently that it was actually the Czech regime which provided asylum to Kádár immediately after his defection on November 1. "Contrary to generally accepted belief," Paul Zinner has written, Kádár "was

unnamed in this article. See also Jan Sejna, We Will Bury You, p. 39.

749. This is according to Ladislav Bittman, a former Czech intelligence officer. See Bittman's interview with the Oral History Project of the International Security Studies Program, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy; Boston, MA, September 1986.

750. Ibid. This was not the first occasion in which the Czechs had been asked to conduct intelligence operations against another Communist state. Prior to Khrushchev's visit to Belgrade in 1955, the Czech intelligence service, like their counterparts in the Bloc, operated a Rezidentura in Belgrade. It seemingly has never been reopened.

The Romanian secret service, the DIE, was also asked to undertake operations against the Hungarians. According to a DIE officer at the time, several hundred Hungarian-speaking Romanian agents were sent into Hungary in an effort to infiltrate Revolutionary student and intellectual organizations, while others were issued Western passports and sent to pose as Westerners visiting Hungary. Both of these intelligence gathering operations were run (reportedly in close coordination with Andropov) out of a newly established Rezidentura within the Romanian embassy in Budapest, headed up by Wilhelm Einhorn, a deputy director of the DIE. See Ion Mihai Pacepa, Red Horizons: Chronicles of a Communist Spy Chief (Washington: Regnery Gateway, 1987), pp. 358-359.

in Prague in the crucial hours of betrayal of the Revolution, readying his appeal to the Hungarian people and composing his cabinet of ministers there."⁷⁵¹ In other accounts of the Revolution, the means by which Kádár moved from Budapest to the Soviet Union prior to his reappearance in Hungary with the Red Army after November 4 have never been satisfactorily established. All that is known for certain is that Khrushchev told Tito late on November 2 that Bulganin had just informed him from Moscow that Kádár and Münnich had succeeded in escaping from Budapest and that they were at that very moment on a flight to Moscow.⁷⁵² If Zinner's assertion is true, then the Czechs' success in delivering Kádár was by far their most important role during the crisis. It is possible that the rescue of Kádár from Hungary was one of the missions given to Czech intelligence in Bratislava and Budapest, although the KGB would seem to have been in a strong enough position in Budapest not to have needed Czech help. There is just very little known about of the details involved in the making of Hungary's quisling.

Unlike the Czechs, the Romanian regime apparently was not considered by Khrushchev to have been sufficiently reliable, or even able, to make a contribution to Nagy's defeat. There is no question that Gheorghe-Dej was unhesitatingly in favor of an expeditious removal of the Nagy regime and of all traces of the

751. Zinner, "The Revolution and Hungary's Neighbors: Czechoslovakia," in Király and Jónás, The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 in Retrospect, p. 116. Unfortunately, Zinner does not give his source for this daring claim.

752. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, p. 133.

liberalizing revolution. Dej's readiness to support the Soviet intervention in Hungary can be measured not only by his role in hosting the Soviet, Czech, and Bulgarian delegations, but also by his unsolicited offer of Romanian troops to assist in the invasion - an offer which the Russians quickly turned down.⁷⁵³ Khrushchev's refusal of Gheorghe-Dej's offer raises the question of why it was that in 1956 the Kremlin insisted on going it alone in Hungary, whereas in 1968 Leonid Brezhnev went out of his way to make sure that forces from other East European states - even if only token contingents - would be involved as well. The likeliest answer is that Khrushchev had probably never even thought of using non-Soviet troops along with the Soviet ones until the Romanians brought it up. Besides the fact that Soviet military plans seemingly had been drawn up before Khrushchev's departure from Moscow in any case, the Soviet leaders simply never viewed the Warsaw Pact as a genuine alliance and thus did not think in terms of available "allies" to help lend credibility to the claim that the intervention was to defend "socialism." Moreover, the Soviet leaders had confidence in the ability of the Red Army to do the job and little faith in even the best

753. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, p. 420., Micunovic, Moscow Diary, p. 134., Pacepa, Red Horizons, p. 358. Perhaps Gheorghe-Dej recalled that in 1919 Admiral Horthy had come to power in Budapest over Béla Kun with the assistance of a Romanian army. If he did, it is an open question whether his offer to Khrushchev in 1956 was motivated more by the desire to make up for his royalist predecessor's part in defeating Central Europe's first Communist regime or by the vision of Romanian soldiers - whatever the ideological affiliation of the Romanian state - riding victoriously into Hungary once more.

satellite armies, let alone the Romanians.⁷⁵⁴ In 1968, by contrast, the men then in power in Moscow were able to judge from the lessons of 1956 that world condemnation (such as it is) might be lessened if action against Czechoslovakia could be portrayed as a multilateral effort and not as a pure Soviet invasion.

His offer of military assistance to Khrushchev in Hungary having been rebuffed, Gheorghe-Dej quickly assented to the Soviet plan for intervention in Hungary, and Khrushchev and Malenkov moved on to Yugoslavia. Yet since Dej had met with Tito only the week before, one has to wonder what account of his talks with the Yugoslavs Gheorghiu-Dej now gave to his Soviet guests. Gheorghiu-Dej had arrived in Yugoslavia along with nearly the whole Romanian leadership on October 19, ostensibly for discussions on economic affairs, but in reality to confer with Tito on the events in Poland and Hungary.⁷⁵⁵ In the few months prior to the outbreak of the Hungarian revolution, Gheorghiu-Dej had resisted

754. Khrushchev was also no doubt aware of Gheorghe-Dej's heavy handed but nevertheless poor performance in trying to stamp out dissent in his own country. There was also no need to infuriate the Hungarians more than necessary; the participation of a Romanian army in Hungary's nightmare was not going to be of any help to Kádár.

755. Relations between Yugoslavia and Romania had improved after Khrushchev's May 1955 trip to Belgrade, although the Soviet initiative toward the Yugoslavs came as quite a shock to the regime in Bucharest. While Tito and Khrushchev were able to see nearly eye-to-eye on the need for de-Stalinization in Eastern Europe, the Romanian leadership did not share that view, and during his June 1956 stopover in Bucharest following a successful visit with Khrushchev, Tito had pressured Gheorghiu-Dej to permit some degree of political and social relaxation. See Stephen Fischer-Galati, The New Rumania: From People's Democracy to Socialist Republic (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967), pp. 60-61.

Yugoslav calls for political relaxation as well as demands for liberalization on the part of Miron Constantinescu, Iosif Chisinevski, and other would-be reformers within the Romanian Party. By October Dej was able to argue that only his firm hand had prevented the sort of turmoil in Romania which had erupted in Hungary and Poland, though in fact even Romania was on the brink of exploding and Gheorghiu-Dej in danger of being displaced from Party leadership. Dej's presence to Belgrade coincided with the visit of Gerő and his Hungarian delegation, which had arrived in Yugoslavia a few days earlier - the visit orchestrated by Khrushchev in the Crimea as an effort to earn Gerő greater legitimation. But it seems unlikely that Tito would have hosted simultaneously the leaders of two neighboring Communist states had their visits not been connected in some way; after all, not even Khrushchev's blessing could have made Belgrade such a Communist Mecca that top Party delegations passed through every day by chance. Furthermore, the Yugoslav leadership was obviously very busy negotiating with the Hungarians, with "gala receptions" added to the slate in what Micunovic termed a commitment "to making the Gerő visit as great a success as possible."⁷⁵⁶

What seems most probable, then, is that Gheorghiu-Dej had traveled to Belgrade on October 19 only at the request of the

756. Micunovic, Moscow Dairy, p. 125. It is quite impossible that Gheorghiu-Dej went to Belgrade in an effort to provide Gerő with an additional degree of support, since public embraces from the dictator of Romania were exactly the type of backing which the precarious Hungarian leadership did not need.

Soviet leadership, or a faction within it, in order to coordinate Bloc diplomacy regarding Poland and Hungary while Khrushchev and his colleagues were in Warsaw.⁷⁵⁷ Whatever had been the precise message which Dej had been asked to convey to Tito or to Gerö, it obviously long since had been overtaken by events, and Khrushchev and Malenkov now surely must have asked Gheorghe-Dej to supply some clue into Tito's thinking at the time. Novotny and especially Zhivkov were no doubt highly interested in the matter as well. No record is offered in Khrushchev Remembers of any such conversation, though, nor does Micunovic make any reference to Dej's role in the Bloc diplomacy of the time. Nevertheless, the fact that Dej had been back in Romania only four days before the arrival of the Soviet, Czech, and Bulgarian leaders (like Gerö, he had remained in Yugoslavia despite mounting trouble at home) would suggest that his insights into the Yugoslav outlook would have been considered highly relevant. If, for example, Dej had concluded that Tito, though disgusted with Gerö, had little sympathy for Imre Nagy, this would have been extremely useful intelligence for Khrushchev and Malenkov on the eve of their important trip to Yugoslavia.

Before turning to the collusion at Brioni, a final word on Romania's role during this crisis is in order. Gheorghiu-Dej was ruthless at home, and Stalinist to be sure, but he does not seem to have been viewed by Tito with the same antipathy as were his

757. Ghita Ionescu, for example, believes that perhaps "Dej was ... acting as Khrushchev's emissary to discuss with Tito the deteriorating situation in Hungary." Ionescu, Communism in Rumania, p. 267.

predecessors Vasile Luca and Ana Pauker, who had led the campaign against Tito following the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform and who at one point had called on the Yugoslav Communist Party to "liquidate its leadership."⁷⁵⁸ Gheorghiu-Dej and his partners in the Romanian leadership after 1952 liked to argue in their conversations with Tito that they had not themselves supported Stalin's efforts to see Tito overthrown, and that it was Luca and Pauker who answered to Stalin, Molotov, and Beria - and maintained close ties to Rákosi.⁷⁵⁹ Tito seems to have accepted the last line of this argument, agreeing that Pauker was Romania's equivalent of Rákosi. The ties between Gheorghiu-Dej and Khrushchev, on the other hand, do not appear to have been close: Dej's rise to power predated Khrushchev's and seems to have arisen from mostly internal Romanian circumstances, while Khrushchev's efforts to promote de-Stalinization were staunchly resisted by the Dej regime. In any case, by October and November 1956 Dej and Khrushchev had evolved the shared goal of keeping liberalization in Eastern Europe within certain constraints, although Dej of course had not seen the need for any change in the first place. It was partly for this reason, then, as well as because of the resentment that any Romanian leader would naturally feel of Hungarian-inspired efforts to destabilize Transylvania, that Gheorghe-Dej proved willing (though he was in no position to object) to permit fresh Soviet troops steadily to

758. Wolff, The Balkans in Our Time, p. 368.

759. Ionescu, Communism in Rumania, p. 267.

enter Romania throughout October and to dig in opposite the Hungarian frontier.⁷⁶⁰ Similarly, Dej had no reason not to be forthcoming in briefing Khrushchev and Malenkov on what to expect in Brioni.

Early in the evening of November 2, in perhaps the most spectacular chapter of the Bloc diplomacy toward the Hungarian Revolution, Khrushchev and Malenkov arrived at Tito's private residence on Brioni, an island off Istria in the northern Adriatic. From the start, the meeting was to be a complete secret: Khrushchev and Malenkov were unaccompanied, and Tito was joined only by Micunovic, secret police chief Alexander Rankovic, and right-hand man Edvard Kardelj. Not only did the Soviet press not mention the visit, but efforts were made to cover it up. On November 3, Izvestia reported that Khrushchev had been among the Soviet dignitaries present the day before at a ceremony in Moscow to mark the signing of a communiqué between Foreign Minister Shepilov and his Belgian guest, Foreign Minister Spaak,⁷⁶¹ while on November 4, Pravda reported that both Khrushchev and Malenkov had attended a reception given the day before - November 3 - by Voroshilov in honor of President Kuatli.⁷⁶² Both disclosures were patently untrue; on November 2 Khrushchev and Malenkov met

760. Ibid., p. 268. As was mentioned earlier, Soviet troop reinforcements opposite Hungary predated by weeks the installation of Nagy as Premier.

761. State Department, Office of Intelligence Research, Chronology of Significant Events in the USSR for 1956, February 19, 1957, p. 12. UPA Microfilm Collection.

762. Ibid., p. 24.

with their Czech, Romanian, and Bulgarian colleagues in Bucharest, and flew later in the day to Yugoslavia, while on November 3 they left Brioni early in the day and arrived back in Moscow only late in the evening. Thus it is quite impossible that either Khrushchev or Malenkov could have been present at either of the two ceremonies in question. Clearly the Soviet leaders sought to give the world, and particularly the nervous Hungarian regime, the impression that everything was running as normal in Moscow. To have made known that two of the top Politburo members were conferring with Tito might have conveyed that something was amiss in the Bloc, or might have tipped off the Hungarians that an invasion was in the works (though Nagy had no shortage of clues already).

From the Yugoslav perspective in the months leading up to the Revolution, Soviet policy toward Hungary had been entirely unsatisfactory. The slowness of the Soviet leaders in replacing Rákosi, and their selection of Gerő in July, had soured somewhat the rapprochement between Moscow and Belgrade - indeed, perhaps this had been precisely Molotov's or Malenkov's intent in installing Gerő. The Yugoslav leadership had also been rankled by Soviet efforts to compel Tito publicly to give his approval to the Gerő regime. Not only had Khrushchev orchestrated Tito's meeting with Gerő in the Crimea, but in July, in a similar attempt to draw the Yugoslavs into the Soviet leaders' Hungary policy, he had insisted that Mikoyan be welcomed in Yugoslavia following his installation of Gerő. And from Tito's point of view, Gerő's trip to Yugoslavia in October was pointless and

counterproductive. But none of this made Tito an automatic supporter of Imre Nagy. On the contrary, the Yugoslavs had decided early on to back János Kádár and his faction in the Hungarian Party, and by the beginning of November they were ready to support whatever plan the Soviet leaders had devised for removing Nagy from power.

In any case, Khrushchev and Malenkov assumed a posture of comradely brotherhood upon their arrival in Brioni, hugging Tito and his colleagues at the outset and going out of their way throughout the talks to appear to take into account the Yugoslav point of view. As Micunovic put it, "it was clear that they aimed to have the meeting end in agreement, even though throughout the conversation it had been obvious that our views on the reasons for the bloody events in Hungary were completely opposite."⁷⁶³ But if Khrushchev and Malenkov had been at all worried that Tito might denounce their plan to intervene in Hungary, their fears were misplaced, as Tito readily endorsed the proposed invasion as the only course that could keep Communism in power there. The account in Khrushchev Remembers is probably exaggerated, but makes the point:

... we were pleasantly surprised. Tito said we were absolutely right and that we should send our soldiers into action as quickly as possible. He said we had an obligation to help Hungary crush the counter-revolution. He assured us that he understood the necessity of these measures. We had been ready for

763. Ibid., p. 140. My italics. Micunovic was correct to point out that the Yugoslav and Soviet leaders had different views on what might have prevented the Revolution from breaking out, but they had remarkably similar ideas on how to defeat it.

resistance but instead we received his wholehearted support. I would even say that he went further than we did in urging a speedy and decisive resolution of the problem.⁷⁶⁴

Micunovic's version of the same conversation gives the Yugoslav side credit for urging the Soviet leaders to limit the bloodshed in Hungary to the minimum necessary, though this was irrelevant to the question at hand. Even Micunovic, however, could not avoid admitting that Tito had agreed to Khrushchev's plan:

We explained that we were also concerned at the swing of events to the right, toward counter-revolution, when we saw the Nagy government allowing Communists to be murdered and hanged. There would have to be intervention if there was a counter-revolution in Hungary, but ... there should be some political preparation, an effort to save what could be saved...⁷⁶⁵

From Khrushchev's statement that "we had been ready for resistance" from Tito, one might guess that Gheorghiu-Dej told Khrushchev that he could expect little from the Yugoslavs but opposition to any proposed invasion; if so, Dej was a poor judge of his Yugoslav host. On the other hand, since Dej had left Yugoslavia only on October 28, before events in Hungary passed beyond that invisible line of unacceptable change, Tito

764. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, p. 421.

765. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, p. 135. My italics. Fehér and Heller have pointed out that Khrushchev's fury over the fact that "Communists in Hungary were being murdered, butchered, and hanged" (Ibid., p. 133.) was entirely disingenuous. Like the other Soviet leaders, Khrushchev had contributed to the past deaths of at least thousands of Soviet Communists, and (to choose a later example), in discussions with the Yugoslavs in 1957 "showed surprising and cold-blooded indifference about the fate of Yugoslav communists then recently murdered by Hoxha." Fehér and Heller, Hungary Revisited: The Message of a Revolution, pp. 55, 73.

(prudently) probably had masked whatever dissatisfaction with Nagy he felt. In addition, Khrushchev's sources of intelligence in Eastern Europe, not to mention his own political sense, must have been telling him that Tito would seek to avert a turning back of the clock in Hungary. After all, had not the Yugoslav regime been pressing for years for exactly this type of relaxation in the bloc? It would be unprecedented for Tito to turn around now, Khrushchev must have been thinking, and endorse Russian establishment by force of a regime to the liking of the Soviet rulers. Yet at Brioni, Tito appeared for all intents and purposes to have done exactly that. He approved in no uncertain terms the planned Soviet invasion and spent most of his time discussing what the post-invasion government of Hungary should look like. In short, no attempt at all was made to try talking the Soviet leaders out of their decision to intervene.

Of course, by quickly coming out in support of the proposed invasion, Tito was hoping to maximize Yugoslav influence in the new Hungarian regime. Micunovic has asserted that Tito really had no choice but to support the Soviet decision,⁷⁶⁶ but this was just a post facto apology: the Yugoslavs were more than capable of objecting to Khrushchev's proposals if they had so desired - indeed, in the past they had defied Stalin, Molotov, and Khrushchev whenever they saw fit. Specifically, if Tito genuinely had desired to see Nagy survive, he could easily have

766. "The Russians are not here because they need our agreement," Micunovic recorded, "They will do what they have decided to do in Hungary whether we agree with it or not." Micunovic, Moscow Diary, p. 134.

threatened to transmit, and then in fact have transmitted, news of the Soviet plan to Nagy, or even to the United States (though unless, as was completely unlikely, Tito was also willing to offer American troops free passage across Croatia and Slovenia into Hungary, news of the Kremlin's proposed invasion would not have changed Eisenhower's determination to ignore Hungary). Khrushchev and Malenkov would have been furious, but what could they have done? The decision to invade Hungary had been difficult enough to take; there was no chance that the Soviet Politburo would now commit itself as well to an invasion of Yugoslavia - with twice Hungary's population, rugged terrain, no Soviet troops in the country, and a Yugoslav-American security arrangement (albeit untested) already in place. Nevertheless, Yugoslav diplomats tried to give the Americans the impression that a Soviet invasion was a distinct possibility. Robert Murphy, the Undersecretary of State, has described how he was poignantly warned that Yugoslav security was in grave danger:

The Yugoslav Ambassador in Washington, Leo Mates, called on me several times. The Ambassador's forehead was wet with perspiration as he described the tense attitude of his government regarding the Soviet armies which were moving along the Yugoslav frontier. He was greatly alarmed by the clamor of the United States for counteraction against the Russians, and he begged that provocation be avoided. He believed that his country was trembling on the thin edge of war against the Soviet Union, and he urged that everything be done to confine the conflict to Hungary.⁷⁶⁷

This was pure disinformation, because the bulk of Moscow's forces in Hungary were nowhere near the Yugoslav frontier, while the Red

767. Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors, p. 430. My italics.

Army troops in Romania were moving toward Hungary, not Yugoslavia. The truth was, as the American Consul in Zagreb was able to report to Washington on November 1, that the Yugoslav military had not seen the need even to move any reinforcements into Croatia.⁷⁶⁸ Disinformation for the Americans' benefit aside, however, the point is that at Brioni on November 2, Tito had no thought whatsoever of cooperating with Imre Nagy or with the Americans in order to try to pressure Khrushchev into calling off the intervention in Hungary. Tito was perfectly content in November 1956 to see Nagy overthrown, later Yugoslav apologies notwithstanding.

One reason why Khrushchev and Malenkov might not have expected such unqualified Yugoslav support for the intervention in Hungary was that they were well aware that the Yugoslavs had maintained excellent contacts in Hungary, and had used those contacts to try to bring down the Rákosi and Gerő regimes. According to an American journalist in Hungary at the time, for example, Hungarians from the Vojvodina appeared in Budapest and addressed audiences of writers, artists, and workers, encouraging them in their hope for reform.⁷⁶⁹ George Heltai added that Tito sent many of his top people to Hungary (in some cases veteran Partisans), where they found excellent sources of information.

768. USZagreb Unnumbered, November 1, 1956. Archives 764.00/11-156.

769. Seymour Friedin, the US correspondent, heard these Yugoslavs "urge Hungarians to demand change. What they meant was a change in the direction of Yugoslavia." Friedin, The Forgotten People, p. 223.

During the Revolution, Borba's representative in Budapest spent a great deal of time in the Parliament building, where he let it be known that his reports "went to the Yugoslav Party - and to Tito himself."⁷⁷⁰ In addition, several of Nagy's top officials seem to have been in contact with Belgrade. Zoltán Szántó, for instance, one of the six men named to the emergency committee established by Nagy on October 29 to direct Party affairs, was on close terms with the Yugoslavs, particularly with Ambassador Dalibor Soldatic. Well before Nagy and his cabinet was to do so, for example, Szántó already had asked for asylum in the Yugoslav embassy in Budapest.⁷⁷¹ Pál Losonczi, another protégé of Nagy's and later Minister of Agriculture and President of Hungary under Kádár, also appears to have maintained links with Belgrade. As Micunovic noted at one point, "the Russians know that Losonczi is in contact with us and regard him as one of Nagy's doubtful characters."⁷⁷² The Kádár regime later charged that Ferenc Jánosi (Nagy's son-in-law) and Miklós Gimes had been in close contact with the Yugoslavs and that Geza Losonczy had visited the Yugoslav Embassy in Budapest five times between October 23 and November 4.⁷⁷³ Of course, Kádár's government found it useful

770. See Heltai's interview with the author, Appendix F.

771. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, p. 137. According to Miklós Vásárhelyi, it was through Szántó that Soldatic offered Imre Nagy asylum on November 3. See Appendix R.

772. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, p. 137. I believe "Losonczi" is the proper spelling.

773. Népszabadság 173, July 23, 1958. Also Irving, Uprising!, pp. 488-489.

after 1956 to portray Tito and Nagy as co-conspirators, but the fact is that the Yugoslav Embassy seems to have used its ample contacts with Imre Nagy primarily to give Nagy the false impression that Tito was backing him. Miklós Vásárhelyi maintains that Ambassador Soldatic visited Nagy with a personal message of support from Tito,⁷⁷⁴ while Heltai, though not aware of any direct meeting between Nagy and the Yugoslavs, agreed that, if only because the Yugoslav diplomats in Budapest seemed to be acting in "good faith," he and Nagy felt that they had Belgrade's support.⁷⁷⁵ The truth was that they did not.

Nagy's positive impression of Yugoslav policy was no doubt bolstered by early statements from Tito in favor of the Revolution, but even then Tito was careful to urge the Hungarian government to restrain the pace of change, lest events get out of hand. In a letter reportedly sent to the Hungarian leadership on October 29, Tito issued a word of advice:

The Yugoslav workers completely understand the rancor of the Hungarian people after the crimes and errors of the past. Nevertheless it would be extremely harmful to the interests of both the Hungarian working people and to socialism in general, even harmful to world peace, if this legitimate discontent undermined the faith of those who work for socialism and for the indispensable development of socialist democracy.⁷⁷⁶

774. Appendix R.

775. See Appendix F.

776. Quoted in Francis Fejtő, "Hungarian Communism," in Griffith, Communism in Europe: Continuity, Change, and the Sino-Soviet Dispute, p. 234. Heltai, however, insists that Nagy never received this letter, and that Tito never contacted Nagy directly, which he could have done had he genuinely had suggestions for Nagy. See Appendix F.

Whatever this letter's professed, though restrained, support for the Hungarians, the statement reveals to what a great extent Tito was a dedicated Marxist-Leninist - certainly no readier than Khrushchev or Mao to see a Communist regime replaced by a non-Communist one. But the real significance of Tito's rebuke to Nagy on October 29 is that it might well have been issued with the thought in mind that it could later help Tito claim that the removal of Nagy was justified. If, on the other hand, the Soviet leadership in the end chose not to intervene, Tito's credibility as a "socialist" leader would only be reinforced in Khrushchev's eyes by his warning to the Hungarians.

Tito's unhesitating willingness to support the Soviet intervention raises the question of why the Yugoslav Embassy offered Imre Nagy asylum just prior to the Soviet invasion. There is no question that Soldatic's invitation to Nagy was made upon orders from Belgrade and not at his own initiative. According to Endre Márton, Soldatic phoned Nagy just after midnight on November 4 with the news that a Soviet invasion would come at dawn and that he was welcome to seek refuge in the Yugoslav mission. When Nagy expressed his disbelief that the Russians would attack the next day, Soldatic told him that Khrushchev had already informed Tito that the Soviet Union would use force to suppress the "counterrevolution."⁷⁷⁷ Another

777. Márton, The Forbidden Sky, pp. 207-208. As was mentioned, Vásárhelyi (Appendix R) believes the offer was originally made to Zoltán Szántó on November 3. Márton does not say exactly on what basis he claims that Soldatic had learned of the conversation between Tito and Khrushchev, but Márton's sources - both Hungarian and Yugoslav - were generally very

account of the Revolution, though rather less credible, claims that Soldatic told Losonczy, who allegedly had asked earlier about possible asylum for Nagy, specifically the following:

We forwarded your inquiry about asylum [for Nagy] to Belgrade. This is the reply: The situation is grave, there may be a fresh attack by Soviet troops at any moment, so my government has decided to extend asylum to Imre Nagy, to the members of his executive and anybody the executive considers worthy of it.⁷⁷⁸

The Kádár regime - again, for its own reasons - later claimed that the decision to grant Nagy asylum had come at "the explicit request of Belgrade,"⁷⁷⁹ and Soldatic himself later all but agreed that this was true: in an interview many years after the Revolution, Soldatic admitted that "During the intervention, we were ordered [by Belgrade] to grant asylum to all people requesting it," which seems to be as close to a confession that the offer of asylum to Nagy was ordered by Belgrade as the Yugoslavs are ever going to make.⁷⁸⁰ According to Miklós

well-informed. Márton knew Soldatic rather well in his own right, but told me that although he had tried to learn the truth about the offer of asylum directly from Soldatic, Soldatic was "never willing to talk about it." See Appendix M.

778. Irving, Uprising!, p. 509. At least one of Irving's sources for this attributed statement seems to have been Szántó.

779. Népszabadság 173, July 23, 1958.

780. See "The November 1956 Story by the Former Yugoslav Ambassador," Radio Free Europe Background Report, November 30, 1977, p. 2. Soldatic's remarks were much more honest, for example, than Kardelj's dubious memoirs. Kardelj claims that "Before the Yugoslav leaders had made a final decision on the plea [on Nagy's behalf for asylum], Imre Nagy had arrived at the embassy and been granted asylum by the ambassador." Kardelj, Reminiscences, p. 133. Heltai believes that Soldatic was actually recalled to Belgrade for

Vásárhelyi, Soldatic was in close contact not only with the Foreign Ministry but also with Yugoslav security chief Rankovic, who had been present at the Brioni talks. Vásárhelyi told me that he knew "for sure that Rankovic phoned Soldatic the first day that Nagy was at the Yugoslav Embassy," which if true was probably not the only time during the crisis that the two men had spoken together.⁷⁸¹

It seems that the reason why the Yugoslavs went out of their way to offer Nagy and his supporters asylum is that Tito hoped to arrange negotiations between Nagy and Kádár. Tito's motivation for doing so was not to allow Nagy to hold a share of power, but only to help Kádár best establish control over the country. At the time of the Soviet invasion, neither Tito nor Khrushchev could be sure that the new Hungarian regime would ever be able to rule effectively, and the Yugoslavs seem to have felt that if Nagy could be convinced to cooperate with Kádár, then Kádár might find it easier to win support for his regime. After all, as Micunovic's account makes clear, Kádár was the Yugoslavs' first choice for the Hungarian leadership, not Khrushchev's - he preferred Münnich.⁷⁸² It is quite likely that Khrushchev's

consultations prior to the Soviet intervention, but this has not been confirmed. See Appendix F.

781. For Vásárhelyi's comments, see Appendix R.

782. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, p. 136. Micunovic claims that the Yugoslavs helped to influence several of Khrushchev's selections for the new Hungarian regime, and I believe this to have been true. When Khrushchev seemed inclined to return István Bata as Hungarian Minister of Defense, for example, Tito cautioned against it and apparently had his way.

readiness to install Kádár and not Münnich as the leader of the new regime was opposed by Molotov and his faction in Moscow, which would mean that Tito's standing with Khrushchev probably was riding on Kádár's ability to reassert control by the Hungarian Communist Party over Hungary. Not for nothing, then, did Rankovic remind Soldatic immediately after Nagy's arrival into Yugoslav hands that "he should encourage Nagy to compromise with Kádár."⁷⁸³ Kádár, for his part, repeatedly announced that Nagy and his group would be permitted to return to their homes, at one point reportedly even saying, "I'll be glad to talk to Imre Nagy at any time, and he can always have a seat at my cabinet."⁷⁸⁴ As Endre Márton spells out, however, Nagy would have no part of it:

On one occasion [during his stay in the Yugoslav Embassy] Nagy managed to smuggle out a note to me ... in which he vehemently denied rumors that he was considering making a deal with Kádár and accepting a position in the new government. He specifically instructed me to tell the world that there was no such deal and that there would be no such deal.⁷⁸⁵

Imre Nagy accepted Soldatic's offer of asylum primarily because he trusted the Yugoslavs, but it was with Soviet officials, not Kádár, whom he wished to negotiate. He knew full

783. This is according to Vásárhelyi, who was present in the Yugoslav Embassy along with Nagy at the time, and who is easily the best source on what Nagy was told by the Yugoslavs. See Appendix R.

784. Barber, Seven Days of Freedom, p. 224. Márton (Appendix M) concurs that Kádár "repeatedly offered to share power with Nagy." According to Vásárhelyi (Appendix R), Kádár never actually offered Nagy a position, but promised him that he could freely return home.

785. The full text of the interview is in Appendix M.

well that the decisions affecting Hungary were being made in Moscow and by Soviet representatives in Budapest, not by Kádár or any of his supporters. Taking everything into consideration, Nagy's inexhaustible (if too optimistic) readiness to negotiate with the Russians was amazing - as his conversations with Andropov, the Maléter-Malinin talks, the proposed Losonczy mission to Warsaw, his desire to go to the United Nations in New York, and his hope even while in the Yugoslav Embassy of reaching an agreement with Moscow all attest. Nevertheless, Nagy was not prepared to take the one step which might have made Kádár's efforts to gain legitimacy in Hungary impossible and perhaps have forced the Soviet leaders to negotiate. Had he so desired, Nagy could have flown to Austria just before the Soviet intervention, along with a few of his advisors, and declared a government-in-exile there. This was what Béla Király urged him to do, and Király was prepared to oversee the operation, but Nagy felt that this would have been an abandonment of his countrymen, and he refused to leave Hungary.⁷⁸⁶ But Nagy might have been less heroic and somewhat more willing to consider Király's proposal had he known that Tito had met with Khrushchev and Malenkov at Brioni only twenty-four hours before the Yugoslav offer of asylum was received. If Nagy had been aware of the closeness which the Yugoslav leadership was now showing to the Soviet regime, Soldatic's embassy suddenly might not have been seen to be the

786. For Király's account, see Appendix I.

best place to stay.⁷⁸⁷ But neither Soldatic nor any other Yugoslav official made any effort to inform Nagy of the Brioni talks, despite the fact that, as Márton and Irving contend, Soldatic knew that Khrushchev had told Tito of the Soviet plans.⁷⁸⁸ Of course, twenty-four hours was too short a time for the details of the Brioni talks to have been spread throughout the Yugoslav bureaucracy, but one must assume that at least the Embassy in Budapest - the most important Yugoslav diplomatic post throughout this crisis and particularly by this stage - would

787. It is worth noting that at the Brioni talks, Khrushchev and Malenkov seemingly never told Tito precisely when the intervention was set to begin. In the account in Khrushchev Remembers, Tito asked specifically when the invasion was to take place and was given no reply:

"Tell me," he [Tito] asked, "when you are planning to begin restoring order in Budapest?" I said that we hadn't decided on the exact day but that it would have to be soon. Tito must have realized that this wasn't entirely true and that we had already designated the date to strike, but I didn't want to tell anyone when our troops were going to move into Budapest. The Yugoslavs were taking no direct part in this business and therefore they didn't need to know. The fewer people who knew, including our friends, the better. ... it would have cost us dearly if word had leaked out about when we were going to begin.

Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, pp. 422-423. My italics. Micunovic confirms the exchange, though he denies that Tito was so blunt as to ask point-blank when the invasion would begin. "We can't ask them and they don't want to say," Micunovic recorded, "For that reason the time factor remains unclear: We don't know what opportunity we may have to influence Nagy and try to reduce the number of casualties..." Micunovic, Moscow Diary, pp. 137-138.

788. It seems plausible that at least one other official in the Embassy knew what had transpired at Brioni. According to Vásárhelyi, Osman Dikic was in fact the most important figure in the Embassy and kept in constant touch with Rankovic. See Appendix R.

have been informed of the meeting.⁷⁸⁹ It would seem that either Soldatic or his superiors in Belgrade - or both - did not want Nagy to know that Tito and Khrushchev had met, and this surreptitiousness would seem to call into question the innocence of the Yugoslav offer to Nagy.

The possibility that the Soviet and Yugoslav leaders agreed at Brioni that Yugoslav asylum to Nagy was the most expedient way to remove Nagy from the scene is a possibility that should not be considered entirely unlikely, but the biggest problem with such a thesis - or with the contention that by holding Nagy and thereby facilitating Kádár's consolidation of power the Yugoslavs were helping Khrushchev - is that almost immediately upon Nagy's entry into the Yugoslav Embassy in Budapest, Soviet pressure began to mount on the Yugoslavs to release Nagy to his fate. This pressure was applied not only through diplomatic means, but more crudely as well: the Yugoslav Embassy was promptly surrounded by Soviet troops, who would then not allow anyone but Yugoslav diplomats (and one or two foreign correspondents) to pass in or out. On November 5, Soviet troops began to fire on the Embassy,

789. The Yugoslav Embassy in Vienna would surely also have been one of the first posts informed that a Soviet invasion of Hungary was imminent. Yugoslav Ambassador to Austria Uvalic had been in Yugoslavia at the time of Khrushchev's visit and returned to Vienna on November 3. He immediately told Bruno Kreisky that in Belgrade's opinion, the "Soviets do not know what to do" in Hungary. USVienna 1081, November 3, 1956. Archives 764.00/11-356. Whether Uvalic was trying to deceive the Austrians or was just uninformed of the results of Brioni is not known, though it is interesting to note that Uvalic himself met with Tito and Micunovic at Brioni on October 29, and may have remained on the island several more days. USBelgrade 573, October 30, 1956. Archives 764.00/10-3056.

and one blast from a Red Army tank smashed through a window that was exposed to the street and killed one of the Yugoslav secretaries, a certain Milovanov, "as he sat at his desk."⁷⁹⁰ Interestingly, according to Vásárhelyi, Milovanov, who was visible through the window, "had a certain physical resemblance to Imre Nagy - he had a mustache and wore spectacles, although he was a younger man."⁷⁹¹ There seems little doubt, therefore, that the Soviet tank crew had been ordered to shoot the instant Nagy should appear at any of the windows, and the soldiers who felled Milovanov must have thought they had succeeded in getting their man.⁷⁹²

By this point, Yugoslav officials could have been in no doubt as to what the Soviet forces in Hungary planned to do with Nagy if they could lay their hands on him. Even if (to assume Soviet-Yugoslav collusion in the asylum offer) Khrushchev had pledged to Tito at Brioni that Nagy would not be harmed if the Yugoslavs first kept him confined, Soviet action on November 5 should have demonstrated that the Soviet military and secret police officials who were overseeing the fight against Hungarian "Counterrevolutionaries" were bent on murder. Nevertheless, in the wake of this incident, and as less drastic forms of Soviet

790. Micunovic, Moscow Diary, p. 152., also USBudapest 239, November 5, 1956. Archives 764.00/11-556.

791. See Appendix R. Nagy was kept in a back room that was not exposed to the outside.

792. According to Sándor Kopácsi, KGB Chief Ivan Serov had posted sharpshooters outside the Yugoslav embassy with specific orders to assassinate Nagy as soon as he came into sight. Kopácsi, In the Name of the Working Class, p. 285.

pressure built up on the Yugoslavs to release Nagy and his colleagues, Soldatic sought and received guarantees from Kádár (as if he were in control) that Nagy would not be harmed if released. Tito then dispatched Deputy Foreign Minister Doubrivoje Vidic to Budapest with a personal message to Kádár that if Nagy could not be guaranteed safety in Hungary then the Yugoslav regime would offer him refuge in Yugoslavia itself. Kádár duly responded on November 21 with a formal letter that read in part:

... the Hungarian government ... repeats herewith the assurance already given several times by word of mouth that it has no desire to punish Imre Nagy and the members of his group in any way for their past activities. We therefore expect the asylum granted by the Yugoslav embassy to this group to be withdrawn and that its members will return to their homes.⁷⁹³

Despite the fact that Tito knew better than anyone - given Khrushchev's admission to him at Brioni that Münnich was the Kremlin's first choice - that Kádár was in no position to be issuing guarantees,⁷⁹⁴ and even though Milovanov's death had given away the intentions of the Red Army and KGB, Tito ordered that the November 21 Hungarian pledge be honored and that Nagy be released. Accordingly, on November 23 Nagy and his colleagues were placed upon a bus provided by Kádár, but virtually the moment the bus left the Yugoslav compound it was stopped by a KGB

793. Quoted in Barber, Seven Days of Freedom, p. 226.

794. Many AVO officials apparently were urging the KGB to authorize the arrest and execution of Kádár himself, fearing that otherwise Kádár eventually would "settle accounts" stemming from his torture at AVO hands under Rákosi. Kopácsi, In the Name of the Working Class, p. 255.

unit and boarded. Yugoslav officials accompanying the group to ensure that the terms of the transfer were carried out were summarily ejected. Following a stopover at a KGB facility outside Budapest (where Serov, the master of deportations, was probably congratulating his subordinates on their many coups that November), Nagy and several of his supporters were whisked away to Romania. They were held there for an undetermined length of time before being returned to Budapest for a secret trial in 1958. In June of that year, despite Kádár's apparent protests, Nagy, Pál Maléter, and Miklós Gimes were executed.⁷⁹⁵

The Yugoslavs protested bitterly to Khrushchev, both at the time of Nagy's abduction and following his execution, but one suspects that Tito was more than eager just to wash his hands of the whole Hungarian business and to overlook the fact that Kádár's pledge, like the Soviet invitation of Maléter to Tököl, the Pravda Declaration of October 31, Andropov's smiling assurances, and so many other similar ploys, had turned out to be a trap. Only in the long run might Tito be said to have had a positive, though indirect, influence on Hungary: his ability to help convince Khrushchev to keep Kádár as Party Secretary and not to install Münnich bore fruit twelve years later, when economic reforms were launched in Hungary that brought a measure of improvement to the lives of the Hungarian population and seemed to restore to the country some of the self-respect that was lost

795. See Judith Pataki and Gábor L. Hajnal, "Imre Nagy Executed 25 Years Ago," Radio Free Europe Research Report, June 21, 1983., and Méray, "The Trial of Imre Nagy," in Király and Jónás, The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 in Retrospect.

after 1956, if not well earlier. But for the Hungarian regime that Kádár headed in the immediate aftermath of the Hungarian Revolution, ignominy and treachery were the best descriptions.

The arrest of Nagy and his partners by the Soviet security police in November 1956 represented the second time in over fifteen years that a Hungarian government had reneged on a major agreement with Yugoslavia, the first having been the Hungarian "Pact of Eternal Friendship" with Belgrade of December 12, 1940.⁷⁹⁶ The Kádár regime, however, enjoyed no leader with the courage and integrity of a Count Teleki. It is true that in both 1941 and 1956 a stronger foreign power left the Hungarians little choice, but Soviet behavior in Hungary in 1956 belies the claim on the part of the Soviet leaders that the USSR represents the antithesis of the Third Reich. By their occupation of Eastern Europe and willingness to murder thousands of Hungarians to keep that empire intact, the Soviet leaders showed themselves to be not only the Nazis' conquerors but their heirs as well. The leaders of the United States, a country, after all, which fought a long and eventually successful struggle against fascism, would do well to keep this in mind.

796. In April 1941, when Hungary was compelled to violate this agreement by permitting German forces to use Hungarian territory as a base for attacking Yugoslavia, Pál Teleki, the Hungarian Premier, committed suicide rather than be part of the ignominious attack.

INTRODUCTION TO THE APPENDICES

These appendices contain the transcripts of eighteen interviews, conducted between 1984 and 1987. Each of the officials interviewed was in one way or another closely involved with the 1956 Hungarian Revolution or with United States foreign policy toward Eastern Europe at the time of the Revolution. Although many of the principal decision makers in 1956 are no longer living (Khrushchev, Imre Nagy, Eisenhower) or are unavailable (Kádár), I feel that the men whose remarks are included here represent the nearest we have today to an "inside story." On the Hungarian side, George Heltai and Miklós Vásárhelyi were two of Imre Nagy's closest advisors and played central roles in the events recounted in this study. Heltai handled all of Hungary's foreign relations during the Revolution and personally drew up the November 1 declaration of neutrality, while Vásárhelyi was part of Nagy's inner circle from 1953 to 1956 and was imprisoned with Nagy in Romania until 1958. Endre Márton, the Associated Press correspondent in Hungary in 1956, was a good friend of Nagy and was in close contact with Nagy and his colleagues throughout the Revolution. Béla Király (along with Pál Maléter, executed in 1958) directed and organized the Hungarian freedom fighters throughout the Revolution and commanded the military resistance to the Soviet army. János Radványi was a Hungarian diplomat with close involvement in Soviet-Hungarian, Sino-Hungarian, and US-Hungarian affairs. He

served as Director of the Far Eastern Division of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry in the late 1950s and was the head of the Hungarian diplomatic mission to the United States at the time of his defection in 1967.

On the American side, Tom Rogers and Gáza Katona ran the Political Section in the US Legation in Budapest in 1956. They were the men "on the spot" for the United States during the Revolution, particularly because the American Minister to Hungary was withdrawn several weeks before the Revolution and a new Minister did not arrive until November 2. William Stearman served in the US Embassy in Vienna during the Revolution, George Lister was the State Department Desk Officer for Poland, and Horace Torbert (later the Chargé d'Affaires in Hungary) helped oversee US policy toward Austria. Like Rogers and Katona, they were involved in the day-to-day formulation of the Eisenhower Administration's policy toward Eastern Europe and were in the best position to judge the effectiveness of that policy. Jacob Beam was the Deputy Director of State for Soviet and Eastern European Affairs (later Ambassador to the USSR) and helped make many of the most important decisions affecting American policy toward Hungary. Both he and Foy Kohler (Ambassador to the USSR during the Cuban Missile Crisis) were able to offer first-hand experiences of the Soviet leaders' perceptions and understanding of the United States.

William Griffith, the Political Advisor at the offices of Radio Free Europe in Munich, and his deputy, Paul Henze, were two of the most central figures in Radio Free Europe's broadcasting

toward Eastern Europe between 1953 and 1957. They were closely involved in the formulation of RFE policy, particularly in determining the long-range goals and expectations of the broadcasts. John Mapother was a CIA officer in Vienna in 1956 and is one of the most knowledgeable authorities on CIA operations and intelligence-gathering efforts toward Hungary during the 1950s. His experiences offer light on the role played by the CIA during the Revolution. Robert Amory was the Deputy Director of Intelligence at the CIA during much of the Eisenhower Administration and helped oversee United States intelligence-gathering efforts in Eastern Europe. He was in close contact with CIA Director Allen Dulles throughout the Revolution and had dealings with many of the principal figures in the Administration.

Hermann Field's story, together with that of his brother Noel, is one of the most unique episodes in US-East European relations. Hermann Field recounts here his own account of what happened to himself and Noel, and suggests motivations for many of his brother's actions. Ernst Halperin, for thirty years one of the most insightful observers of East European affairs, visited Hungary during the Revolution as a correspondent for the German Münchener Merkur.

APPENDIX A:

INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT AMORY, JR.

Washington, DC: March 26, 1987

SWARTZ: Mr. Amory, what was your position at the time of the Hungarian Revolution?

AMORY: From February 1953 to April 1963 I was Deputy Director of Intelligence at CIA.

SWARTZ: Do you think that President Eisenhower was ever serious about trying to liberate Eastern Europe?

AMORY: In the early months of the Eisenhower Administration, Bobby Cutler, Foster Dulles, and Sherman Adams decided (while sitting in the Solarium of the White House) that they ought to do a thorough job of analyzing the options regarding the Soviet Union which were before them - not just Rollback, but many other options on many fronts. Initially they created a team to draw up the terms of reference for the project, and I represented the intelligence community on that team, along with Generals Tick Bonesteel and Jimmy Doolittle (Chairman) and Assistant Secretary of State Bob Bowie. We defined what each of the three Task Forces would study, which ranged from Containment (Task Force A) to Rollback (Task Force C), with a fuzzier third option in between.

Several weeks later, the Task Forces presented their reports in the basement of the White House in an all-day session before the full NSC, the NSC staff, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Attorney General, and so on. I thought the whole Solarium Study was a very sensible exercise, because when all was said and done the only part of the "C Team" approach which seemed to be even marginally feasible was to dust off the old Albanian operation from the Truman days and have a go at that. But even that was risky, because it might have driven Yugoslavia back into the arms of Moscow. And even if you succeed in Albania, what have you got once you've won? It's just a poor country that's completely isolated from the rest of Eastern Europe.

SWARTZ: Did the Solarium Study concern itself only with Eastern Europe?

AMORY: It looked at various approaches of dealing with the Communist countries, though primarily with the USSR and the European satellites. China had already been

addressed in a parallel exercise by the JCS and the intelligence community. One problem which still had to be examined was the stalemate in Korea. The JCS came up with six options for escalation, one of which one was to hit Manchuria with nuclear strikes. Foster Dulles conveyed the message that we were serious about this to the Indian Foreign Minister, and the Indian Ambassador to Peking, K. M. Panikkar, leaked the word to the Chinese, who took the first steps toward a cease fire.

SWARTZ: To return to the point about Yugoslavia and the Albanian operation, do you think that for ideological reasons, to show that Communism was not in fact irreversible, it would have been worth getting a free Albania if it meant a Soviet-dominated Yugoslavia in return?

AMORY: Not at all, and the Greeks wouldn't have been very happy with that either. But we did manage to turn around some of the countries which were sliding down the slippery slope toward Communism - Indonesia, for example, and Egypt later. One of the things that came out of the Solarium Study was a best-case presentation for continuing the Albanian operation, after which Eisenhower said that it still wasn't good enough for him. He had no desire to get tangled up in the mess there, so the whole thing was terminated.

As far as the Yugoslavs were concerned, they were very divided in how far they wanted to go in dealing with us. In 1956, when Allen Dulles made it known that he wanted a copy of Khrushchev's Secret Speech at almost any cost, I proposed making a straightforward approach to Belgrade to ask for a copy, since we knew that they had been furnished with an official text, and we had already supplied them with hundreds of millions of dollars worth of military and economic aid. The idea was approved by Allen Dulles and Frank Wisner, and by Foster Dulles and Bob Murphy at State, and so in May 1956 I and Ambassador Riddleberger had a meeting with the Yugoslav Foreign Minister, Edvard Kardelj. We later heard that Kardelj wanted to make the speech available to us (with the understanding that we would disguise how we got it), but that Rankovic (the Interior Minister) convinced Tito not to do so.

Eventually Jim Angleton and his Counterintelligence people got a Polish copy of the speech. Bill Barker, Counselor of the British Embassy in Washington, who had been the British Ambassador in Warsaw and was familiar with all the nuances of Polish, was able to confirm the authenticity of the text.

SWARTZ: Did you have a good relationship with Angleton?

AMORY: Well, Angleton and his group came up with so many lurid suspicions of everybody that it got to be ridiculous. During one period, I later learned, I was figured to be the mole in the Agency by Angleton, and at one time or another so were most others. Angleton's logic was always too convoluted to follow.

SWARTZ: In 1956, as turmoil grew in Poland and Hungary, was there consideration within the CIA of ways to try to exploit it?

AMORY: First of all, I should stress that we had no role at all in instigating the uprising in Hungary. There were later meticulous reviews of all the radio broadcasts (not only by Radio Free Europe) on the US side and by a committee of the Bundestag, but both governments were satisfied. We didn't find a single occasion on which we had promised arms or anything like that. After all, eighty or ninety percent of the broadcasts were based on reports from Hungarian stations and were just being beamed back to Hungary or were from Czechoslovakia about Hungary. There were no problems with VOA, and Radio Liberty had not been involved. So I think we were pretty clean about that.

SWARTZ: But it isn't it true that you and others at the CIA were trying to come up with ways tangibly to help the Hungarians?

AMORY: That's right, and I was horrified at how the government had become so bemused and befuddled by Suez. In the UN at the time, hardly any time was spent on Hungary, which was really a huge mistake. I think that if Foster hadn't been hospitalized in the middle he would have put much more emphasis on Hungary, but it was impossible to make any headway with Herbert Hoover, Jr., who unfortunately became Acting Secretary at the time.

What I recommended, as soon as it had become clear that the Russians, instead of withdrawing, were pouring reinforcements into Hungary, was that we give the Soviets an ultimatum - and I prepared a draft - saying that either they keep their hands off Hungary or we would not be responsible for whatever happened next. I pointed out to my colleagues that practically all of Hungary's rail links with the Soviet Union passed through a tight bottleneck in Ruthenia, which meant that a very small surgical strike at a few marshaling yards in those narrow valleys would seriously disrupt the Soviets' ability to move troops into Hungary. Of course that immediately would have fired up Soviet preparations for general war.

SWARTZ: Well, after all, you're talking here about dropping nuclear weapons on Soviet territory.

AMORY: But not on major cities. There is no question that there would have been civilian casualties, but I just felt that there had to be serious attention within the government given to the Hungarian issue, that we had to have something on the table to compete with this nonsense about how to deal with the British and French over Suez.

SWARTZ: Did Allen Dulles approve your suggestion for an ultimatum and forward it on to the NSC?

AMORY: He told me to go talk to Robert Bowie, who was then the head of the Policy Planning Staff (officially the Assistant Secretary of State for Policy Planning). From the very start of Allen's tenure as DCI, he was extremely concerned that he not come across as a policy initiator, and he didn't want to cross up his brother, who was running State. He was particularly sensitive to this issue at that moment, because Foster was having surgery and Allen knew that it would be intolerable to Foster for him to step in and try to call the shots. So Bob and I discussed the problem, but I guess my idea went down the drain pretty fast.

SWARTZ: Did you ever try to have the ultimatum issued?

AMORY: No, I just suggested it through my channel. Bob Bowie and I sat opposite each other on the NSC Planning Board, so it was perfectly legitimate for me to discuss the matter with him there. We were responsible for preparing the draft policy papers which the full NSC would then approve or modify.

SWARTZ: What is your view of the message which Eisenhower did send to Khrushchev, saying that the US did not see Poland or Hungary as a potential military ally?

AMORY: It was an effort to persuade them civilly to suppress their worst fears, that the uprising in Hungary would result in the extension of NATO right to the Soviet border. But the little piece of Ruthenia - formerly only an appendage of Czechoslovakia - which bordered Hungary was really not a very important piece of Soviet territory, although they probably wanted us to think that it was. I wouldn't disagree with a statement like the one we made so long as it was just a preliminary step, so long as we stressed to the Soviets that they should take a "wait and see" attitude with Nagy. But a quick military strike against the Soviet troops in Ruthenia would have given a stronger political message.

SWARTZ: Do you think that we really needed to give Khrushchev this reassurance on three different occasions, beginning with Foster Dulles' campaign speech in Dallas on October 27?

AMORY: As a matter of fact, I played a role in reviewing that speech. Foster had asked Allen to come over to State and help review the speech, which was the only address Foster gave in the whole campaign. and Allen asked me whether I'd come with him. So a small group of us met to review the speech, including Bob Murphy, Livingston Merchant, and Bob Bowie. I don't think there was anyone from the Pentagon, and there was just Allen and myself from the Agency. But as far as that phrase goes where we assured the Russians that we had no military interest in Poland or Hungary, there was no objection from any of us.

SWARTZ: However, that was at the very time when the Soviet troops were about to be withdrawn from Budapest and it seemed to many as though the Hungarians had succeeded. Perhaps Khrushchev might have accepted some type of political compromise at that point if we had put on some pressure.

AMORY: The Soviets were probably preparing their next move. I think that they needed time to get military reinforcements into place. They knew that their first contingents in Budapest had realized that the Hungarians who were fighting were just workers, and so they wanted more effective fighters. So they reached way back across the Volga to get Uzbeks and Kazaks who wouldn't have any sympathy for the Hungarians.

SWARTZ: But from a political, rather than a military, point of view, someone in Moscow had to be asking the question, "What will the Americans do?" And then they get the explicit answer that the United States takes no interest in the matter - doesn't that just encourage them to do as they please?

AMORY: I think that the goal was to forestall what the Germans used to call a Vorwärtspanik - "when in doubt, attack." The idea was to try to calm them down.

SWARTZ: Did the NSC Planning Board, on which you sat, meet at all during the Hungarian crisis?

AMORY: Sure, we met a couple of times. But we never got into things which were fast moving situations. We never tried to write quick and dirty policy papers or amendments to existing ones, although we might have kicked certain ideas around informally or exchanged

information on the issue in question. Once gunfire started we weren't consulted.

SWARTZ: As I remember reading, though, the President asked during the Hungarian crisis that the Planning Board review US policy toward Hungary and Poland. Yet it wasn't until November 19, a full two weeks after the Soviets suppressed the Revolution, that the final version of the relevant study, NSC 5616, was approved.

AMORY: That's just the point - we weren't expected to make crisis type decisions. The study on Hungary and Poland was a deliberative study, a "where do we go from here?" type of approach. By contrast, when Khrushchev threatened England, France, and Israel with his missiles, the Planning Board wasn't involved in deciding how the US should respond. Allen was on his way to New York to vote in the election at that point, but when his plane landed and he heard of Khrushchev's threats, he just turned around and went back. He never had the chance to cast his vote. That evening, the IAC, the Intelligence Advisory Committee (in later years renamed the US Intelligence Board) wrote a Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE) saying Khrushchev was bluffing. It was a two hour exercise, and everyone there, including the military representatives, concurred.

Incidentally, that SNIE was marked "US eyes only," and almost immediately Chet Cooper, our liaison man with the British, called me up from London at 3 AM our time and said that if he couldn't go into his Joint Intelligence Committee (their version of our IAC) meeting with that information, then our relations with the British intelligence community were as good as dead. So on my own authority I told him to go ahead and do so. Pat Dean, Allen's opposite number in London, received a knighthood for his role during the crisis, and the fact that the intelligence link with the British was maintained helped keep British-American relations from worsening even more than they did.

SWARTZ: I have read that U-2 reconnaissance aircraft were used to overfly the Mediterranean during the Suez crisis, but do you know if they were also used to overfly Hungary?

AMORY: I can't say for sure that they weren't, but I never saw any information to indicate that we were getting that sort of intelligence, although we certainly had the capability if we had wanted to use it.

SWARTZ: As far as you know, did the President have as close a personal interest in Hungary as he seems to have had in Suez?

AMORY: I wouldn't want to characterize the specifics of the President's reaction, since I wasn't in the White House, but I think that everyone in the upper reaches of the Administration was just furious with the British and the French. Their claim that Nasser had done them wrong, which was made with a tremendous amount of propoganda here in Washington, was almost unbelievable.

SWARTZ: Hungarians who were involved in the Revolution have told me that they could see why in principle the US would oppose the British and French in Suez, but they couldn't understand why in October 1956 the US would do so without also trying to stop the Russians in Hungary.

AMORY: I have always suspected that the British, French, and Israelis moved up the date of their attack on Egypt in order to take advantage of the events in Hungary. From what I later heard from colleagues in England, the date of the operation originally was to have been after Eisenhower's reelection. That really got Eisenhower upset - that they went ahead with this just before the election, obviously expecting that Ike wouldn't want to risk any trouble with the Allies at that time.

I think that the Israelis in particular wanted to move in Sinai before the action heated up any further in Hungary. They were afraid that the US and the Soviets might get involved in some type of confrontation in Europe, which would lead Eisenhower at the same time to order the Sixth Fleet to put an end to the fighting in Egypt. And the British were convinced as it was that we were tailing them in the Mediterranean. They undoubtedly feared that we might threaten to do to them what they did to the French at Toulon during the War.

SWARTZ: Did the CIA know on November 1, 2, or 3 that Khrushchev and Malenkov had flown to the Polish border for discussions with the Poles, and from there had traveled to Romania and Yugoslavia, for quick consultations with the other Warsaw Pact countries and with Tito?

AMORY: There must have been assessments of Khrushchev's whereabouts at the time, but I just don't know what was in the raw intelligence. Cord Meyer had an open line to Bill Griffith at Radio Free Europe in Munich, so we knew what the RFE people were saying, but I don't recall any mention of the trip you're referring to. We certainly didn't know that Serov, the head of the KGB, was in Hungary, and we didn't know all that much about Andropov.

SWARTZ: Did the CIA believe that Andropov was already working in the KGB?

AMORY: We always assumed that every Soviet Ambassador was part of the Soviet intelligence apparatus, whether or not they were nominally subordinated to Serov.

SWARTZ: Were you surprised that the Yugoslavs endorsed the Soviet invasion of November 4?

AMORY: I would say I was disappointed. It was a little like in 1968, when Kádár supported the crushing of Dubcek. He hated to do it, but when ordered to commit rape he still complied. He sent a full division into Czechoslovakia.

APPENDIX B:

INTERVIEW WITH JACOB D. BEAM

Washington, DC: August 4, 1986

- SWARTZ: Ambassador, what was your official position in 1956?
- BEAM: I was the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Soviet and East European Affairs.
- SWARTZ: Did the desk officers for the various East European countries therefore report to you?
- BEAM: Well, I was the head of the office in which we all were a part. My boss, the Assistant Secretary, was Burke Elbrick. The two people who were probably the most knowledgeable about Hungary were the desk officer, Bob McKisson, and Andor Klay, an official in the Research office, INR.
- SWARTZ: To what extent did the Eisenhower administration's call for the liberation of Eastern Europe translate into State Department policy directives to bring that about?
- BEAM: Not much. "Rollback" was a slogan that Dulles used in the 1952 campaign, but once he was Secretary of State he used the phrase less and less.
- SWARTZ: Did people within the Department see any chances for revolution or change in Eastern Europe?
- BEAM: There were encouraging signs. The Poles revolted, and they succeeded in getting away with it. At the time it looked like there would be substantial reforms in Poland, although in the end it didn't happen. Gomulka enlarged the area of Polish autonomy, but his regime was in no sense liberal, much to our disappointment.
- Khrushchev was a very shrewd man, and in February 1958 he invited Gomulka to come visit him at his guest house just over the Soviet border, where he wined and dined him. This was just after Sputnik had gone up, and Khrushchev's push was that the USSR was the "wave of the future" and that Poland should cut its relations with the United States down to the bare minimum. Khrushchev's pressure was very effective.
- SWARTZ: Was it the view within the State Department at the time of the Hungarian Revolution that the Soviet Politburo was divided on how to proceed toward Eastern Europe?

BEAM: Not really. Khrushchev had already established his power, and although Molotov was a hardliner he carried out Khrushchev's policy.

SWARTZ: In 1956, but before the Hungarian Revolution, did officials in the State Department see Imre Nagy - then out of power - as a potential Gomulka, a potential reformer?

BEAM: No, I don't think so. During the Revolution we were obviously hoping for the victory of the insurgents, but they were beaten pretty quickly.

SWARTZ: Was the Legation in Budapest given any instructions to assist the freedom fighters?

BEAM: No, things moved too fast. We certainly let it be known to the rebels that we were on their side, but we did not incite them to military action. Because some of our news transmitters were on German soil, the German Federal Government later made an official investigation which exonerated us. I do have a suspicion, however, that some of our more frenetic announcers whipped up enthusiasm which may have prompted activists in Hungary to take certain risks.

Except for the Mindszenty problem, I do not recall sending special instructions to any of the missions in Eastern Europe, beyond keeping them informed of current developments and general policies. Our missions in the area were competently led and performed well, although in Budapest we didn't even have a Minister until well into the Revolution, and he was never able to present his credentials.

SWARTZ: Do you think things might have turned out differently if Chris Ravndal had still been in Budapest?

BEAM: I don't think so. We just didn't have very much influence over internal events in Hungary. In Dallas, Secretary Dulles made a very statesman-like statement, in which he laid down our policy. He said that the United States had no ulterior motives in its policy toward Poland and Hungary, and did not see those countries as potential military allies. That was a very good statement. I believe he wrote it himself.

SWARTZ: Yet why go out of the way to assure the Soviet leaders that the United States has no intention of taking military steps to influence the situation in Poland and Hungary? Why not let the Soviets worry about it?

BEAM: It's unrealistic to think that we would mess around in that part of the world. Just a little while earlier we

had approved the independence of Austria, so how could we reach the Hungarians?

Our first concern was to avoid any act which would provoke the Russians to destroy the Austrian State Treaty, which gave that country its independence. Any threatening military move on our part to help Hungary would induce the Russians to reoccupy Austria.

SWARTZ: But even if we were in fact never considering any military options, why come out and say so?

BEAM: I don't see that we would gain very much from that. We didn't want Poland and Hungary as allies, and we didn't want them to be military allies of Russia either (though we recognized that that was probably inevitable). If the revolution had broken out in a country that bordered NATO, then we could have made some troop movements or something like that.

SWARTZ: Officials from the Imre Nagy regime have said that what they wanted from the United States was not military assistance but diplomatic support, such as a high-level UN visit to Hungary. Do you recall such an idea being discussed within the Department?

BEAM: I think that we dismissed the idea as impractical, since it would be vetoed right away by the Soviets. We considered many imaginative things which were not terribly realistic.

SWARTZ: Do you think that there is anything that we could have done differently regarding Hungary?

BEAM: Without Presidential elections or Suez I think that we could have made things very uncomfortable for the Soviets. The anger which we directed against the British, French, and Israelis over Suez could otherwise have been directed against the Soviets. None of the three ever let us in on what they were up to in Suez, but we knew damn well what they were doing every step of the way.

In the United Nations we would probably have pushed for more severe sanctions against the Soviet Union were it not for the consideration that we would have been compelled to apply similar measures against our traditional friends and allies.

SWARTZ: To what extent was State Department policy toward Hungary in 1956 coordinated with other government agencies?

BEAM: Defense, CIA, and the NSC were kept apprised and were consulted in a somewhat informal fashion. Action and decision-making lay principally in the hands of John Foster Dulles, Legal Adviser Norman Phleger, Robert Murphy, USIA Director Theodore Streibert, and also very much with President Eisenhower himself. Undersecretary Herbert Hoover represented the Secretary when the latter was absent in New York.

Although the President was greatly annoyed by the conspiracy and incompetence of the British and French, he was careful to preserve the alliance and was subsequently repaid by the support he received at the 1960 summit boycotted by Khrushchev.

APPENDIX C:

INTERVIEW WITH HERMANN FIELD

Shirley, MA: February 12, 1987

SWARTZ: Dr. Field, when you visited Warsaw in 1949, was that your first trip to Poland?

FIELD: No, I had visited Katowice in March 1939, helping the British Consul there arrange for Czech political leaders to escape from the Sudetenland. Then I was in Krakow from April to September 1939, where I helped arrange for about 3000 Czech refugees to reach England, though unfortunately many of them were still in Poland when the war broke out; we tried to escape on foot to the Polish Ukraine when the Germans invaded. From 1940 to 1947 I worked as an architect (my profession) in the United States, for most of the period with Case Western Reserve in Cleveland.

Following the war I led a delegation of architects on a trip to both Western and Eastern Europe, in which we compared the reconstruction efforts going on each of the countries. I had been planning to conduct another such tour in 1949, but it was canceled at the last moment. Meanwhile, I had been selected Dean of the School of Architecture at Case Western, and as part of a summer vacation I traveled to Italy for an architecture conference. While I was there I got an urgent call from Noel's wife in Geneva, who said that Noel had disappeared in Czechoslovakia. She wanted to know if I could help.

SWARTZ: Do you know why she hadn't contacted the US Consulate?

FIELD: I think she was afraid of causing a sensation. She felt that the chances were better of resolving the problem if we worked behind the scenes and didn't come out and publicly challenge the Czechs. Also, she was reluctant to contact American authorities because Noel had been mentioned at the Hiss hearings and it seemed that the US might be interested only in producing a subpoena.

SWARTZ: What did you think you would be able to accomplish on your brother's behalf?

FIELD: Well, I knew many of the leading members of the Czech government in this period. Before the war, for example, I had personally helped arrange the escape from the Nazis of Václav Nosek, the Czech Minister of the Interior in 1949. I also knew quite a few people from my architectural contacts, particularly in Warsaw. But

immediately prior to my flight from Warsaw to Prague, I was secretly arrested.

SWARTZ: Is it true that the Polish security officer who arrested you was Jozef Swiatlo, who later defected to the United States?

FIELD: Yes, that's right. Later he claimed that he tried to ensure that I was not poorly treated during my imprisonment, but that certainly was not true. He said, for example, that he arranged for me to have some of the least brutal interrogators, and perhaps as far as my main interrogator was concerned that was the case. He was an "intellectual" and carefully tried to tie me up in abstract discussions; in the end I think he became convinced that I was not guilty, and then he was removed. But he was the exception - the others very much seemed to believe in my guilt.

SWARTZ: Do you accept the thesis of Stewart Steven's book, Operation Splinter Factor, that the CIA used Swiatlo to pass disinformation to the Soviets to the effect that Noel was a top American spy?

FIELD: I'm not sure. First of all, the idea of portraying Noel as a leading CIA agent was an obvious thing to do, because of Noel's wartime work with the OSS. But given Stalin's paranoia, he needed little prompting. I talked with Steven about it, but all he would tell me was that his account was based on what a top CIA official had told him. That may have been Angleton, but when I tried, through Steven, to see if I could set up an appointment with him, Angleton absolutely refused.

Harry Rositzke, who was on the Polish desk while I was in prison, used to hint that there might have been something going on like what Steven suggests. Just the same, I think I would pretty much agree with what Shawcross wrote, that Steven probably had blown the whole thing way out of proportion. I should add, though, that Erica Wallach, my brother's adopted daughter, tends to believe Steven's account.

SWARTZ: The credibility of Steven's book seems to rest on the question of whether Swiatlo was a US agent before he defected. What do you think?

FIELD: I have always had some lingering suspicions that Swiatlo was an American agent all along. Allen Dulles tried to persuade Flora Lewis not to write her book, perhaps because he was afraid that the CIA would be shown to have been working with Swiatlo. And, why did Swiatlo never write his memoirs? Maybe to hide the fact that he'd worked for the Americans. I remember that on one

occasion, my sister succeeded in arranging a meeting for herself with Swiatlo, but his CIA handlers wouldn't allow him to speak frankly.

SWARTZ: Who do you believe was responsible for the decision to arrest you and Noel?

FIELD: It could have been Stalin and Beria, as Steven suggests. The decision might have been passed down from Beria to Jakub Berman to Swiatlo, but it's impossible to know for sure. In Hungary, Gabor Péter might have had his own links to Moscow, as Berman no doubt also did. What is certain is that the Russians didn't trust the Poles and Hungarians enough to tell them what they really believed about me or Noel.

SWARTZ: Why do you think Noel was not executed like Rajk or Szönyi?

FIELD: There were too many risks involved. They just weren't willing to put an American on trial, although they would keep him in prison for further reference. All they wanted was for Noel to indict leading Hungarians or Czechs, like they wanted me to incriminate leading Poles. Although they did their best to take out statements out of context, they never succeeded in getting a usable confession out of either of us.

SWARTZ: After he was released in 1954, why didn't Noel leave Hungary?

FIELD: He'd spent most of his life in Europe and felt comfortable there, and had always worked to try to bring Eastern and Western Europe closer together. And given the Hiss hearings and the political climate in the United States in this period, I don't think he had any interest in living in American again.

SWARTZ: Do you think he suspected that his imprisonment in Hungary had been due to CIA disinformation against him?

FIELD: I don't think he was aware of that per se, but he did believe that what had happened to him was a result of the paranoia with which the East European leaders reacted to United States foreign policy. But a lot of this is irrelevant, because the purges would have taken place anyway.

SWARTZ: Did you ever later visit Noel in Budapest?

FIELD: Yes, I saw him and his wife there in 1964, 1966, and 1969. He was treated as a hero by the Hungarians, particularly by Kadar, who had survived a similar experience. When he died his ashes were put into the

official wall, and so were his wife's when she passed away in 1980 (I was at the ceremony). When I saw him, Noel was pretty upset about the Vietnam War, and I think that in the wake of the Czech crisis of 1968 he became very bitter in general with both sides. He never wanted to talk about it.

SWARTZ: But in 1956, isn't it true that he supported the return of Soviet forces on November 4?

FIELD: Yes, he did, because he felt that the situation under Imre Nagy had gotten out of hand and that the country faced a counter-revolution. He believed that Kadar could bring Hungary back on track.

APPENDIX D:

INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM GRIFFITH

Medford, MA: March 3, 1987

SWARTZ: Professor, what was the relationship between Radio Free Europe and the CIA at the time of the Hungarian Revolution?

GRIFFITH: In terms of policy, the CIA was essentially a sort of conduit for guidance that one would occasionally get from the State Department. Indeed, the whole reason for the arrangement with the CIA was because we could not have an open relationship with State, given the situation at the time. The irony is that the Free Europe Committee, RFE's parent organization, was originally set up on the basis of an idea by George Kennan. Its initial function was largely to deal with émigrés to the West. I think Kennan thought that this would be a way of getting them off the backs of the State Department.

SWARTZ: As though this was the closest we were going to come to setting up governments-in-exile?

GRIFFITH: Something like that, yes. Then they started with the idea of having a radio station, which these émigrés would either run or operate or somehow be involved in. Then the Korean War broke out, and the whole thing was greatly expanded. But the CIA practically never originated any policy directives, whereas on occasion the State Department did. The CIA, like all intelligence agencies, operates under the assumption that nothing is important that isn't classified. And since the RFE material wasn't classified, they weren't particularly interested in it. They had FBIS, after all, and all kinds of analysts in Washington.

SWARTZ: But they were giving RFE a lot of money, weren't they?

GRIFFITH: Sure, but that didn't involve anything comparable to control. You should remember that at the time the entire Free Europe outfit had a very high level board of directors. The first Chairman was Ambassador Joseph Grew, for example, and C. D. Jackson was another - these were not people who could be ordered around. They were not about to receive and automatically carry out directives. It was a curious kind of autonomy.

SWARTZ: Wouldn't that create a lot of friction with the émigrés, who wanted to see a more active policy?

GRIFFITH: Yes, that was also true. In general though, the State Department, like most foreign offices, was always uncomfortable with propaganda, which was something they felt could interfere with diplomatic relations. As a result, and this would vary depending on who was in office, there was always a certain tension.

SWARTZ: Are you saying that the American diplomatic missions in Eastern Europe wanted only to improve relations with their Communist hosts?

GRIFFITH: They would give it more priority than they would to having the radios broadcast things which they considered unwise.

SWARTZ: Would you characterize the broadcast policy of RFE at the time more as informational or as agitational?

GRIFFITH: I wouldn't say that it was agitational, but rather that it certainly expressed - and still does - various views on what was happening in Eastern Europe. Within the radios and within the government, opinions differed on what the proper mix should be. I don't know that we considered the broadcasts agitational, but the debate was never whether to have only information, or only propaganda.

SWARTZ: But propaganda can be true.

GRIFFITH: That's right. My point is just that the debate within RFE on the content of broadcasts was constantly going on.

SWARTZ: But isn't it fair to say that most people at RFE were hoping for uprisings in Eastern Europe along the lines of what actually ended up happening in Hungary?

GRIFFITH: The fact is that everyone at RFE was immensely surprised when the Hungarian Revolution broke out. Nobody in RFE expected it - and nobody in Hungary expected it either. It was completely spontaneous. Once it began, of course, there is no question that everyone at RFE hoped it would succeed. Whether we expected it to succeed is another matter.

SWARTZ: Were you familiar with a CIA program called Operation Red Sox/Red Cap, designed to infiltrate émigrés back into Eastern Europe as American agents?

GRIFFITH: If such an operation ever existed, I never heard of it. In principle I wouldn't assume that this never happened, but I have no way to know.

SWARTZ: Was RFE involved in the effort to transmit leaflets by balloon into Eastern Europe?

GRIFFITH: The balloon operation was carried out by another branch of the Free Europe Committee.

SWARTZ: What was RFE's position on Imre Nagy during the Hungarian Revolution? Were Hungarians called upon to support him?

GRIFFITH: During the Revolution the rebels had captured the provincial radio transmitters and were broadcasting from them. These broadcasts were monitored in Munich, and since it was clear that Radio Budapest remained under the control of the government and the Communist Party, the Radio Free Europe broadcasts tended to reflect more the views of the provincial broadcasts, which were rather anti-Nagy. Of course the provincial opposition to Nagy came mostly out of ignorance, since Nagy had been cut off from the revolutionary forces outside the capital and they were cut off from him.

SWARTZ: Béla Király told me that he was very bitter about RFE, that they had called him by name to keep fighting.

GRIFFITH: It's possible, but I don't remember. But it is an enormous exaggeration of the impact of any kind of external propaganda to believe that it can either start a revolution, or stop it, or keep it going. It just never happens.

SWARTZ: Didn't publishing Khrushchev's secret speech have a major impact in Hungary?

GRIFFITH: It was beginning to leak out anyway. The CIA obtained a copy of the speech - it's never been revealed how - and published it, but even before then it had been distributed so widely around Eastern Europe that it was bound to come out, though perhaps not as soon or as completely. The speech had an important effect, but that was not the key factor in prompting the Revolution.

In Poland, however, the broadcasts by Radio Free Europe of the testimony of a high-ranking secret police official who defected, Jozef Swiatlo, probably did have a significant effect. We know, for example, that they resulted in the removal of the Polish Minister of the Interior, Radkiewicz. But again, the process was underway before these broadcasts.

SWARTZ: There have been allegations that Swiatlo was an American agent even before he defected. Do you know anything about that?

GRIFFITH: I have no basis to believe it. I think Swiatlo just decided that the game was up and fled. It's very common for Communist police to believe that a defector was an American agent - it's an easy explanation. In studying Communist countries, where so little is known for sure, it's very dangerous to suspend the rules of evidence. So unless there is some evidence that he was an American agent, I think you have to start out assuming that he wasn't.

SWARTZ: Following the Revolution, were any changes seen to be needed in RFE? Or were people disenchanting?

GRIFFITH: As I remember, the head of the Hungarian desk at RFE became quite ill during the Revolution and eventually retired, but the question of whether we should keep broadcasting was never even raised. You've also got to remember that the station was broadcasting to five countries: the broadcasts to Poland, to give another example, were considered both inside and outside of Poland to be very effective.

I wouldn't maintain that there were no mistakes made in RFE's policy during the Revolution; I would be surprised if there weren't. But there was a lot of revolutionary optimism, and we were affected by that. At the time it was very difficult to make up one's mind about what the Soviets were going to do. In retrospect, though, I think that the Soviets were swayed a great deal by how the Hungarian Revolution was affecting areas more strategic than Hungary - Poland, East Germany, and parts of the Soviet Union. And Ulbricht, Novotny, Andropov and the others were all urging them to intervene.

SWARTZ: Do you believe the Chinese claim that they were also urging Khrushchev to go in?

GRIFFITH: Yes, probably; that seems logical. The Chinese initially probably urged Khrushchev to let developments proceed in Poland under Gomulka, and they probably urged him to intervene in Hungary. But I don't think that was by any means decisive.

SWARTZ: Do you think Khrushchev resented Mao's advice?

GRIFFITH: Sino-Soviet relations began to deteriorate seriously in early 1958, less than two years later, so Khrushchev was presumably already pretty leery of the Chinese. I think the Chinese regarded the developments in Hungary in 1956 as dangerously revisionist.

SWARTZ: Then why would they support Gomulka?

GRIFFITH: They probably concluded that he wasn't dangerously revisionist, whereas Nagy was.

SWARTZ: Apparently they preferred Kádár.

GRIFFITH: Although only once he was already in power. The one who supported Kádár the most was Tito.

SWARTZ: A number of Imre Nagy's supporters have said that they had been in close contact with the Yugoslavs - they seemed to have been led to think that Tito was in favor of Nagy.

GRIFFITH: He was, at least until a point. Tito later justified the second Soviet intervention, in part because he felt that Nagy had gone too far, but also because he feared the Revolution would cause him serious problems in the Vojvodina.

APPENDIX E:

INTERVIEW WITH ERNST HALPERIN

Brookline, MA: February 4, 1987

SWARTZ: Professor, during which period of the Hungarian Revolution were you in Hungary?

HALPERIN: I arrived in Hungary on November 2, two days before the Soviet invasion. I had been in Hungary once before, in 1954, on the occasion of the World Youth Festival in Budapest. Prior to that I had been the Belgrade correspondent for the Neue Zürchner Zeitung, but in 1956 I was working for the Münchener Merkur, a conservative newspaper that is Strauss' organ today. I drove into Hungary with Peter Wiles, (a British economist) and Count Radványi (a prominent Hungarian expatriate).

SWARTZ: What was your impression of revolutionary Hungary?

HALPERIN: The first thing that we did on the way to Budapest was to stop at a tractor station twenty or thirty miles inside the border, where we interviewed the tractorists. They said they were on strike and would stay so until the Russians left, at which point they would form two political parties - Socialist and Catholic - and conduct free elections. So this was all modeled on Austria and not on Yugoslavia. Molotov was right when he warned Khrushchev against a State Treaty with Austria.

Then we went to Győr, where the town council was in the hands of a revolutionary committee. We asked them, "What do you do when you get your orders from Budapest?" and they answered, "At present we receive no instructions; we make demands."

SWARTZ: What was the situation in Budapest?

HALPERIN: We went to see the Kilian barracks on November 3. There were many ruined tanks there, and we saw the corpse of a charred Russian soldier still hanging out of one. Hungarian students had thrown Molotov cocktails at the machine gun openings of the tanks - they had learned that in school, in a book about the Russian civil war called The Young Guards.

At one of the main squares, perhaps Bartók Square, we saw barricades manned by young men in black fur hats - the symbol of the officer school of the Hungarian army. So Hungarian officers were fighting the

Russians. By Monday (November 5) the Russians had overrun the barricades. Shooting went on for days.

SWARTZ: Did you have a chance to meet with any of the leading Hungarian figures before the Soviets crushed the Revolution?

HALPERIN: Count Radványi had arranged an interview with Cardinal Mindszenty for Sunday (November 4), but it never took place. We found out early on that morning in our hotel lobby that the Russians were back, but the Russians were careful and didn't hit the hotels.

Eventually we got our visas stamped by the Foreign Ministry, but the Russians along the road stopped us. We were part of a long caravan of correspondents, and the Russians told us that we needed a "Propusk," a travel pass. So we went to the headquarters of that unit; they were a Guards Division, crack troops that were very well behaved. An officer in light blue and a light blue cap - KGB - said in bad German, "Gute Reise."

SWARTZ: Was that your last visit to Hungary?

HALPERIN: No, I returned in 1962. The Hungarian government was encouraging foreign correspondents to come visit, and promised to give us access to the people we wished to see. One of the officers at the Hungarian Embassy in Vienna told me that I would be able to meet with Noel Field, who was still living in Budapest and whom I very much wished to speak with. So I went to Hungary, but I was never able to see Mr. Field. I tried to track him down in Budapest and at a spa near Lake Balatón, but to no avail. Apparently he wouldn't allow anyone to speak with him; Flora Lewis tried and was also turned away.

SWARTZ: Did you have a chance to meet with Kádár?

HALPERIN: Yes, but not in Hungary. I met Kádár very briefly in Warsaw, during one of his visits to see Gomulka. I shook hands with him, but I didn't have the chance to ask many questions.

APPENDIX F:

INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE HELTAI

Charleston, SC: January 21, 1986

SWARTZ: Professor, how did you come to know Imre Nagy?

HELTAI: I had met Imre Nagy (who was a friend of my wife's family during the war in Moscow) on a few occasions, but close contact between us began only after I was released from prison. By coincidence, we had apartments on the same street, and Nagy came to visit me upon my return home; we would go for walks together and discuss the state of affairs in Hungary. With time he came to count on me as an advisor and a friend.

SWARTZ: On what charge were you originally imprisoned?

HELTAI: Everything you can imagine - conspiring against the government, spying for Yugoslavia, working for the British, being an agent of the Americans, and so on. This took place at the time of the Rajk trials.

SWARTZ: Was it at the insistence of one of the Soviet advisors that you were arrested?

HELTAI: For a long time I thought so, but much later I talked with a former high ranking officer in the AVH - one of Gábor Péter's deputies - who said that the lion's share of the arrests in 1949 and after should be blamed on Rákosi and not on the Soviets. In his opinion the Russians wanted a much more mild purge, but Rákosi took the Soviet call for prosecutions as a license to arrest anyone he didn't like or of whom he was at all suspicious.

General Bielkin, Stalin's deputy in Eastern Europe at the time, was asked after the first wave of arrests, in May, to come to Budapest, where he met with the leaders of the AVH. He asked them what percentage of the people arrested were genuinely guilty of the charges brought against them. Most people said 85 or 90 percent (nobody dared claim 100 percent), but the officer I later talked with said 50 percent. Bielkin answered that he thought that even 50 percent was too high. "It's your affair," he said, "but you will destroy your own party." And when he left Budapest he said to the AVH leadership, "Don't do it again."

Péter and three of four of the others, according to this account, answered that they were merely carrying out the instructions of Rákosi and the Party leadership, but

that they would be willing to write Stalin a letter describing Rákosi's excesses if Bielkin would secretly deliver it (the AVH officials were naturally afraid to oppose Rákosi openly). Bielkin agreed and took the letter with him to Moscow.

Rákosi, however, somehow had managed to find out what was going on and immediately flew to Moscow himself. But whereas Bielkin had to go through the various official channels and talk with Abakumov before he could meet with Stalin, Rákosi was able to see Stalin right away and thus to tell his story first. So when Bielkin finally met with Stalin he was told that Rákosi had Stalin's support and that Bielkin should cooperate with whatever Rákosi chose to do in Hungary.

So Rákosi was able to purge nearly one third of the people who had made up the original membership of the pre-war Hungarian Communist Party, a higher percentage than in any other country in Eastern Europe.

SWARTZ: Did the Hungarian Party leadership have any role in the purges in Czechoslovakia?

HELTAI: Rákosi had been complaining to Stalin that Slansky was arming the Israelis, and indeed that was one of the charges brought against Slansky during his trial, but we in the Hungarian Foreign Ministry knew that Czech policy in the Middle East was based on specific instructions from Moscow.

SWARTZ: Of all the Hungarian leaders, was Rákosi the closest to Stalin, or was Gerő, or someone else, Stalin's favorite?

HELTAI: Gerő was an old hand in the NKVD. In Spain he was one of the most important men on the Soviet side: it was Gerő, for example, who helped orchestrate the purges of the POUM in Barcelona.

SWARTZ: Did Tito work for Gerő at the time?

HELTAI: Tito, Ulbricht, and Togliatti were all working for the Comintern, and Gerő was one of the men in charge. Still, Gerő did not know Stalin as well as Rákosi did.

But this was not the asset to Rákosi that you might think it would be, because Stalin and Rákosi in fact didn't get along at all. Imre Nagy told me that Stalin used to speak of Rákosi as an English agent.

One thing which brought Rákosi and Stalin somewhat closer together was the arrest and sentencing of Rákosi for the second time in the 1930s by the Horthy regime, immediately following the completion of his first prison

term. Somebody, perhaps Dmitrov, suggested to Stalin that the Soviet Union use the case for anti-fascist publicity. Stalin agreed and ordered an international campaign on Rákosi's behalf.

It is my feeling, however, that when Rákosi was installed in Hungary after World War II, it was not because of support from Stalin or anyone in the Soviet Party apparatus, but upon the recommendation of certain people in the NKVD.

SWARTZ: Could Beria therefore be considered Rákosi's sponsor?

HELTAI: Perhaps, but I really don't know exactly which figures in the NKVD were Rákosi's strongest backers. It was simply always my impression that Rákosi had extensive support within the NKVD, although those ties were probably not as strong as Gerő's.

Rákosi's relations with Stalin were never good. After the war, Rákosi had on his desk a red phone, which I remember we all assumed was a special line to Stalin's office. In fact, the phone was connected to the Budapest headquarters of the Allied Control Commission's Soviet branch, and they would decide whether to forward the call to Stalin. Rákosi was also dependent on the Control Commission for transportation, as nearly all vehicles in the country were in the Soviet Commission's hands.

SWARTZ: Did Rákosi's relations with Stalin improve once Communist rule in Hungary had been securely established?

HELTAI: I don't think so. On one occasion Rákosi and I were staying in a Moscow hotel as part of a Hungarian delegation, when Rákosi unexpectedly came up to me and asked if I would be willing to switch rooms with him. He said that his suite was too big and too cold, but of course the real reason was that Rákosi had lived in Moscow long enough to know not to trust the Soviets; just to be safe he wanted to keep them guessing as to which room was really his.

In the morning he invited me to come along with him on a quick visit to the Central Committee building, but instead of being shown in to see Stalin, we met with the Central Committee functionary responsible for Hungarian affairs. That was Rákosi's great contact in the Kremlin! Rákosi met with Stalin only when the rest of the delegation met with Stalin, at the scheduled reception.

SWARTZ: How did Rákosi's relations with Moscow change following Stalin's death?

HELTAI: In early June 1953, Rákosi, Hegedüs, István Dobi, and Imre Nagy were invited to Moscow. They were ushered into the Kremlin, and the whole Politburo was there. Khrushchev, who was the main speaker, blasted Rákosi's policies and insisted that he would have to yield the position of Prime Minister to Imre Nagy.

Rákosi protested that everything he had done had been authorized by Soviet representatives, but Khrushchev told him not to complain lest he lose the post of First Secretary as well. Then Rákosi agreed to yield the Premiership but argued that Nagy was the wrong man for the job, because he was not close enough to the Soviet Union. At that point, according to what Nagy later told me, Beria remarked, "That is something we know much better than you." "And who do you think you are?" Beria went on, "The Jewish king of Hungary?"

So Rákosi was instructed to help Imre Nagy restore the credibility of the government in the eyes of the Hungarian people. When Malenkov lost the Soviet Premiership, however, Rákosi and Gerö flew back to Moscow, where they portrayed Nagy as Malenkov's man and requested permission to dismiss him. But they were told to continue to work with Nagy, and for a while they did so.

SWARTZ: Did you meet Mikoyan or Suslov during either of their trips to Hungary in October 1956?

HELTAI: No. Imre Nagy met with them alone, without advisors. After the first meeting, on October 24, Nagy was put under house arrest. Nagy's son-in-law, Ferenc Jánosi, accompanied Nagy to the room where Mikoyan and Suslov were waiting, and was then sent away. Jánosi's wife (Nagy's daughter) came over to our house and tried to phone Nagy at Party headquarters, but for two days neither of us was able to reach him. I got through to Jánosi, though, who said that they were being held and couldn't talk.

After they had been released Nagy told me about the meeting with Mikoyan and Suslov. The Soviet emissaries apparently had declared that all the trouble in Hungary had begun during Nagy's Premiership, and that it was therefore Nagy's responsibility to restore order in the country.

SWARTZ: Then why did they also replace Gerö with Kádár as First Secretary of the Party?

HELTAI: My hunch is that once the Soviets had removed Hegedüs, Gerö could see the writing on the wall and asked whether he could come to Moscow along with Hegedüs. But the

formal removal of Gerő was a decision taken by the new Hungarian Central Committee and not by Mikoyan or Suslov. Kádár was regarded at the time, along with Imre Nagy, as one of the leaders of the opposition within the Party; he was ferociously opposed to the policies of Rákosi and Gerő.

SWARTZ: Were there any plots at this point within the Party against Imre Nagy?

HELTAI: The Hungarian Central Committee was a bunch of complete cowards. They had held a long meeting the night of October 22 and practically every one of them was against Nagy. Most of them were so opposed to Nagy that even after it was obvious that Nagy had won the support of Mikoyan and Suslov, they still would not stand up for him. In fact they actually tried to get the Soviets to reverse their decision. The Polish Central Committee, on the other hand, stood up for Gomulka.

SWARTZ: What role did the Chinese embassy in Budapest play at the time?

HELTAI: Following our withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact and our appeal to the UN, the Chinese ambassador, Ho Te-ching, came to meet with Nagy. I saw him come in (Nagy and I had adjacent offices and an adjoining waiting room), but I didn't meet with him myself. After he left, I asked Nagy about the meeting, and Nagy said that Ho seemed sympathetic toward us. He asked Nagy what our plans were for the future, what we hoped to achieve, and whether we thought we would be able to hold on to power.

Ho also wanted to know what we were doing to prevent violent excesses on the streets. I know that Nagy asked József Szilágyi, one of his advisors, to see if something could be done to reduce unnecessary violence. In one case, when the house of a left-wing publisher - not even a Communist - was being vandalized, a detachment of soldiers was sent over to quell the trouble, and the problem was taken care of within an hour.

SWARTZ: What did Ho Te-ching say was the Chinese position toward the Revolution?

HELTAI: Nagy asked him that question, but Ho answered that he really couldn't say. He said that all he could do was to send his reports to Peking, which he claimed would be in the hands of Mao Tse-tung in a matter of hours.

SWARTZ: Did he offer any encouragement or support?

HELTAI: Not specifically. But he was very kind and polite, and seemed to come across as sympathetic. So although he never came out and said that he was behind us, we still had the impression that he was in favor of the Revolution, and that in his reports he would certainly urge Mao to support us.

However, I had never dealt with the Chinese before (that was the first time I had met the ambassador), and since then I've discovered that Chinese diplomats always smile and sound sympathetic.

SWARTZ: Did Ho Te-ching mention to Imre Nagy that Liu Shao-chi was in Moscow at the time?

HELTAI: I don't recall whether he did. But the Liu mission was not that important - the Chinese decisions were going to be made by Mao in Peking, not by Liu in Moscow. What was important was what was happening right in Hungary, and it had to have been clear to the Chinese in Budapest that this was not a "Counterrevolution" at all - nobody wanted to restore capitalism or to join NATO.

SWARTZ: Some years later the Chinese publicly claimed credit for the Soviet intervention in Hungary, arguing that their pressure upon Khrushchev was what finally convinced him to invade. What is your reaction to that?

HELTAI: I am very suspicious of ex post facto explanations. It may be that the Chinese are right, that they really did urge Moscow to intervene, but I'm not convinced. The Hungarian Revolution, like the rise of Gomulka in Poland, was exactly what the PRC favored - Communism in power but without being controlled by Moscow. They had acknowledged as much in the case of the Poles.

SWARTZ: However, the Chinese would never support the fall of Communism from power, and there were signs in Hungary of an emerging multi-party system.

HELTAI: Those changes had been accepted by Mikoyan and Suslov during their second trip to Budapest. In their first visit they were openly hostile, and blamed Imre Nagy for all the trouble. But when they returned they pledged to support the Revolution and whatever initiatives Nagy enacted.

At that point Nagy said that the Hungarian government had approved that day a multi-party system. There was a long silence, and then Mikoyan and Suslov asked which parties were to be included. Nagy answered that the parties involved would be the same ones which had been active after the war - with Soviet authorization at the time. Then Mikoyan and Suslov said the change would be

all right, but I think they also cautioned against going too far.

SWARTZ: Did Nagy believe that Mikoyan and Suslov were genuine in their acceptance of the Revolution during their second visit, or did he suspect that they might be trying to deceive him?

HELTAI: He thought that they were genuine in their support. Mikoyan and Suslov were sent to Budapest after Nagy had become deeply disillusioned with the Soviet leadership. He had phoned Moscow a number of times to get an explanation for the Soviet military activity in Hungary, and found the Soviet excuses (which Andropov was giving him as well) to be unacceptable.

So when Mikoyan and Suslov came back, Nagy was no longer as naive or as ready to believe the Russians as he originally had been. Imre Nagy was a disillusioned man by then, and had serious reservations about Mikoyan and Suslov. Nevertheless, by the time they left he was convinced that they were sincere.

It seems quite possible, then, that Mikoyan and Suslov belonged to the wing of the Soviet Politburo which wanted to find a peaceful solution in Hungary.

SWARTZ: I might believe that of Mikoyan, but that sounds hard to accept as far as Suslov is concerned.

HELTAI: Suslov was one of the last internationalists; for him the international movement was as important as Communism in the Soviet Union. He was much more sensitive to the potential repercussions on the international Communist movement of a forceful Soviet intervention in Hungary than were people like Khrushchev and Kaganovich, and that's why he was sent to Hungary. At least part of the Soviet Politburo hoped that he and Mikoyan could work out a peaceful solution with Nagy.

It had to have been obvious to any visitor that calm was returning to Hungary. There were no more battles in the streets, and despite smashed shop windows there was no looting.

SWARTZ: But if Nagy was proving to be able to restore order, why did the Soviets keep pouring more troops into Hungary?

HELTAI: I believe that this was an effort undertaken by the Soviet military to defend its own prestige. The Red Army had invested twelve years and a tremendous amount of effort in Hungary, and then it was defeated by teenagers in three days.

SWARTZ: Could Zhukov have ordered military moves in Hungary without Politburo authorization?

HELTAI: He must have had support from someone on the Politburo, certainly Voroshilov and probably Molotov and Kaganovich as well.

SWARTZ: Meanwhile Andropov tried to deceive Imre Nagy about the purpose of the Soviet troops in Hungary?

HELTAI: Yes, but he was not very convincing. On the evening of November 1, Andropov was summoned to a combined meeting of the Hungarian Politburo and government, where he was informed that because of Soviet military behavior we had withdrawn from the Warsaw Pact and declared our neutrality. Andropov charged that this was intolerable and counterrevolutionary, whereupon Kádár replied that if it was counterrevolutionary it was only because the Soviet troop movements had left Hungary no choice. And Kádár added that although he was an lifelong Communist he would fight the Soviet army himself if it came right down to it.

SWARTZ: In the talks between Pál Maléter and representatives of the Soviet army, do you think that Soviet general Malinin and his delegation knew that Serov was going to come in and arrest the Hungarian delegation?

HELTAI: No, I think that the Soviet generals were earnest in their negotiations and were as surprised as Maléter by what happened. I had spoken with Maléter after the first meeting, in the Parliament building, and he told me that the talks were going very smoothly. He said that the Soviets had agreed to withdraw from Hungary and were insisting only that the Soviet troops be permitted to leave in dignified fashion. So Maléter was very optimistic.

SWARTZ: Perhaps Malinin was just being careful to give the impression that nothing was amiss, in order to lure Maléter and the others to Tököl.

HELTAI: According to György Fazekas, who was in Tököl with Maléter, when Serov appeared - an unknown little man who entered abruptly through a side door - the Russian generals were as surprised as the Hungarians. The Soviet leaders don't trust their generals enough to tell them everything.

SWARTZ: Did you have any dealings with the Yugoslavs during the Revolution?

HELTAI: After Imre Nagy had sought refuge in the Yugoslav embassy, the Yugoslav chargé d'affaires met with me a

couple of times and brought me notes from Nagy. Nagy wanted some of his belongings brought to him from his house, so he sent me his keys and instructions where to find everything. He particularly wanted me to gather up all of his writings, including his copies of all the memoranda which had been sent to the Russians. Accordingly, my wife and I went over to his house and collected his materials for him.

SWARTZ: Micunovic claims that Nagy wrote a letter to Romanian leader Gheorghiu-Dej from inside the Yugoslav embassy. Do you know anything about that?

HELTAI: That sounds very strange, since nobody knew at the time that Romania would be the site of the imprisonment of Nagy and the others.

SWARTZ: Among the notes from Nagy that the Yugoslav chargé brought you, were there any letters to be mailed?

HELTAI: No, just requests for personal belongings.

SWARTZ: Did the Yugoslav chargé ever indicate that there might be trouble for Nagy upon his release?

HELTAI: At one point he asked me, and this made me a little bit suspicious, whether Hungarians were envious of Nagy for hiding out with the Yugoslavs while everyone else had to face the occupation. I answered that most Hungarians were glad that Nagy was someplace safe.

SWARTZ: Weren't you concerned about your own safety at the time?

HELTAI: For the first few days I was, so I spent the nights with friends (only two blocks from my own apartment). On the fifth day of the occupation I got a call at home from Antal Apró, who was one of the members of the Nagy government to join Kádár. He said that the new regime was holding the post of Deputy Foreign Minister open for me and that I should come down to discuss it. I answered that I couldn't do that, whereupon Apró replied, "Don't worry, I'll send a tank for you." But I said that it wasn't the trip from Buda to Pest that I was afraid of, and that in any case I wasn't interested in the position.

After that my family was sure that Apró would send the police or that there would be some action against us, but nothing happened. I decided to leave the country only after Miklós Gimes had been arrested.

SWARTZ: Why didn't you go to the Yugoslav embassy along with Nagy and the others?

HELTAI: Julia Rajk called me up at five or six in the morning on November 4 (the first night that I had gone home from Parliament, as everything had seemed so quiet) to say that everyone around Imre Nagy was going to the Yugoslav embassy and that I should join them. I said that such an idea was crazy, that for safety sake the group should split up. She replied that they would be safe in an embassy, but I didn't think that the Russians would give the Yugoslav embassy that sort of respect.

When I said that I wouldn't join them, she urged me to seek refuge in the Austrian embassy, and I said that I would think about it. A few people, such as the writer Tibor Déry, had gone there (he was refused), but I didn't like that idea either. It seemed to me that as the representatives of a neutral state, the Austrians in Budapest were going to have difficulty granting asylum in cases where the Russians raised serious objections.

SWARTZ: Why then would Imre Nagy trust the Yugoslavs, who would seem to have even greater reasons to give in to Soviet pressure?

HELTAI: They had offered their embassy to him for use in an emergency, and he accepted the invitation in good faith. He had no reason to believe that there was any Yugoslav collusion with the Soviets.

SWARTZ: Is it true that Soldatic, the Yugoslav ambassador, made the offer over the phone to Nagy after midnight or early in the morning of November 4?

HELTAI: That sounds about right, but I don't know whether it was Soldatic or the chargé d'affaires. Soldatic had been recalled at some point to Belgrade for consultations.

SWARTZ: Did you or Imre Nagy or any members of the Hungarian government know that Khrushchev and Malenkov had flown to Brioni on November 2 to meet with Tito?

HELTAI: No. However, that visit probably explains why Soldatic offered Nagy asylum: he must have known that there was about to be a Soviet attack on Hungary, and so wanted to do what he could to save Imre Nagy.

SWARTZ: Do you think that Soldatic made the offer on his own?

HELTAI: He must have had orders from Belgrade; he could never have taken such a major step without explicit instructions. The Yugoslavs wanted to keep Nagy from falling into Russian hands.

SWARTZ: Might it not be possible, though, given what followed, that Belgrade's orders to offer Imre Nagy refuge might

have been designed precisely in order to allow him to end up in Russian hands?

HELTAI: I remember Soldatic as an honest man, who didn't play such games. He was very sincere.

SWARTZ: What if Soldatic himself was not told about Khrushchev's visit to Brioni, in order that he should be able to make the offer to Nagy so sincerely? Perhaps if Nagy had known that Khrushchev had conferred with Tito just prior to the Soviet invasion he might not have been so ready to trust the Yugoslavs.

HELTAI: That's a good point. If Imre Nagy ever had known that Tito had met with Khrushchev, he would immediately have tried to reach Tito, to explain to him what was really happening in Hungary. I would certainly have known if Nagy had tried to contact Tito, but he never did.

SWARTZ: As far as you know, did Tito ever try to contact Nagy?

HELTAI: No, Tito relied on his own channels. In addition to Soldatic and his staff in the embassy, there were a number of Yugoslavs in Budapest who were close to Tito. Borba's correspondent in Hungary, for example, had been a Partisan and had fought with Tito. He was in Parliament quite often during the Revolution, and on one occasion he told me that his reports went to the Yugoslav Party - and to Tito himself - as well as to the newspaper.

SWARTZ: Do you recall whether a letter from Tito to Nagy, in which Nagy was warned against going too far, was received during the later stages of the Revolution?

HELTAI: No such letter arrived. I saw a copy of the letter in question only after we were out of power. If Nagy had received any letter from Tito, whether one released publicly or a personal one, he would definitely have shown it to me.

SWARTZ: Did you and Nagy's other advisors therefore believe that Tito was supporting you?

HELTAI: Yes. We had no idea that he had hosted Khrushchev and Malenkov in Yugoslavia. It is possible that the Soviets may have decided to consult with Tito only because the Poles had refused to support the Soviet invasion plans.

I say this because on November 3 a representative of the Polish leadership called us and offered his government's wholehearted support for negotiations to revise the Warsaw Treaty. He offered Warsaw as a site for

Hungarian-Soviet negotiations and for a meeting of all the members of the Warsaw Pact.

SWARTZ: Since the Poles had been informed of the Soviet plans two days earlier at Brest-Litovsk, could their offer to you have been a deception?

HELTAI: I don't think so, since Gomulka stood up to Khrushchev at Brest.

SWARTZ: Was the dramatic offer of November 3 the only Polish communication to Imre Nagy during the Revolution?

HELTAI: Not at all. Almost every day there was a call from Warsaw, checking to see how things were going, whether we were safe, how our cause was progressing, and so on. They came across as very supportive and encouraging.

SWARTZ: But they didn't tell you that Khrushchev had met with them on November 1, did they?

HELTAI: No, they never indicated that Khrushchev had been there or that there was any danger to us. Neither Cyrankiewicz nor Gomulka nor any other member of the Polish leadership called himself, however, so it is possible that our caller simply was not aware that Khrushchev had met with the leadership.

SWARTZ: Did you have any contact with representatives of the other East European states?

HELTAI: The Czech ambassador came in at least three times, and the Romanian ambassador once; they were both pretty upset. They each told us that what we were doing was causing them serious problems at home, particularly with their Hungarian minorities. They accused us of starting something which would destroy their ability to rule.

At one point the Hungarian military attache in Prague, Szücs, who had once been a student of mine, called me to say that in his opinion most Czechs wanted to follow our example. The Czech leadership was probably more afraid than anyone, even more than the Romanians. During the war the large Hungarian minority had been the only real left-wing group in Slovakia, and despite Communist ideology was still regarded as an enemy of the state.

SWARTZ: Did the Czech ambassador refer to any conversations or meetings between Novotny and Khrushchev, or to any special Soviet emissaries to Czechoslovakia at the time?

HELTAI: No.

SWARTZ: I bring this up because in his memoirs Micunovic refers to a CPSU Central Committee delegation to Prague led by Averki Aristov. Did you ever hear any reference from anyone to such a delegation?

HELTAI: No, but generally I have found Micunovic's writings to be reliable.

SWARTZ: Do you think that Khrushchev's memoirs are genuine?

HELTAI: Yes - the memoirs are very biased, but also are very characteristic of Khrushchev. I believe that the writing is his own, though someone probably went over it before it was released.

SWARTZ: Did the Romanian ambassador mention anything to you about troop movements in Romania?

HELTAI: We asked him how it was that Soviet troops were entering Hungary through Romania, but he claimed not to know anything about it. He said that decisions to move Soviet troops were being made by the Russian generals and that the Romanians were not being consulted. "If anyone should be held responsible for the military activity," he said, "it is you, not us."

SWARTZ: Did most Hungarians see as the model for the Revolution an Austrian-style neutrality or a Yugoslav-style Communism?

HELTAI: Finnish-style neutrality. Finland maintained a strong Communist party, good relations with the Soviet Union, and many elements of socialism. Finland's successful diplomacy and international relations were also very appealing.

Perhaps if Hungary had had better leadership in 1945 we could have pulled off something like what the Finns were able to do, but during the peace negotiations in Paris the Hungarian delegation never even raised the issue of a Soviet military withdrawal from Hungary. At the time, many of us in the Communist Party thought that we could establish some sort of Communist-dominated Danubian confederation, which would be on good terms with the Soviet Union but free of Soviet troops - in effect a showcase of what Communism could accomplish.

István Kertész and I drew up such a proposal, and because I was the secretary of the foreign policy committee of the Central Committee, I presented it to Révai, who was the head of the committee. Révai was an old "Muscovite," but he agreed that the proposal offered a way to potentially stabilize Communism in Hungary. Apparently there was some interest in the idea in Moscow

as well, but what support there was seemed to disappear after the death of Zhdanov, who may well have been supporting us. Révai never mentioned names, but after Zhdanov died, the plan was forgotten, although it could have enhanced Soviet prestige (and power) internationally.

SWARTZ: There has been a lot of speculation on how the West might have helped Hungary in 1956. What was your reaction when you first got word of the British and French invasion of Suez?

HELTAI: I became very optimistic. I knew that Suez would be a vital issue for the Americans, in large part because as British power declined the United States was being forced to become more involved in Africa. Therefore what I expected was that the US would stop the French, British, and Israelis in Egypt, but that it would do so only if the Soviet Union showed restraint in Hungary. After all, American action against its allies was in effect a favor for Moscow; so I thought that the Americans would certainly require some Soviet cooperation in return.

SWARTZ: What reason would the Soviets have to make such a deal?

HELTAI: On their own the Soviets could never have gotten the French and the British out of Egypt. They might have threatened to intervene, but they had no way to carry it out. Khrushchev could never have expected to force the Western powers out of Egypt and at the same time to crush Hungary without getting into a war with the United States, and yet that is exactly what happened.

SWARTZ: So you thought that the Soviet leadership was prepared to give up control over Hungary in exchange for keeping Egypt out of the Western camp?

HELTAI: Exactly. Of course, we'll never know whether I was right, because the United States forced France and Britain out of Egypt without asking anything of the Soviet Union. It is my belief that if the United States had shown signs of supporting the Revolution, Khrushchev would have had to act more cautiously in Hungary.

SWARTZ: Did you ever expect American military assistance?

HELTAI: We expressly asked the West not to supply us with any form of military aid. What we wanted was diplomatic help.

SWARTZ: How was this message conveyed? Did Imre Nagy call in the Western ambassadors?

HELTAI: Péter Mód, a top Foreign Ministry official who was a good friend of mine and later ambassador to the UN, personally brought notes to the Western ambassadors explaining our position. He met with me beforehand at great length, and I told him just what it was that we sought from the Western powers.

When Mód came back from his meeting at the US legation he said that it had gone very well, and that the Americans had promised to cable Washington immediately.

SWARTZ: When exactly did these meetings take place?

HELTAI: Mód delivered our messages only half an hour after the declaration of neutrality.

SWARTZ: In other words, there had been no request for American diplomatic support until November 1?

HELTAI: Prior to November 1 any approach on our part toward the US would have been seen by the Russians as a provocation. We wanted first to stabilize the revolutionary achievements in Hungary and then lay down the groundwork of future policies. Secondly, the Suez crisis had been going on for two or three days already, and we thought that Suez would lead to negotiations between the Americans and the Russians, in which, as I said, the US would put pressure on Moscow regarding Hungary.

SWARTZ: Didn't anyone foresee that the Suez crisis might divert Western attention away from Hungary, and leave the Soviets a free hand?

HELTAI: Many people were afraid of that, but there also seemed to be an opportunity for negotiations and progress. I suppose that I was more optimistic than most of the others.

SWARTZ: Did you meet with any American diplomats yourself?

HELTAI: No, the only contact I had with Americans was with a few journalists. But I remember that early in the Revolution many people came in to say that there was a white flag flying from the American residence. I was very upset by this insulting incident: did the US think that the Revolution was anti-American?

SWARTZ: Did Nagy meet at all with any Western representatives?

HELTAI: I don't think so. I am certain that he never met with the Americans, but the French ambassador may have come in.

SWARTZ: Did you ever expect some sort of automatic American support, based on the Eisenhower administration's public call for liberation of Eastern Europe?

HELTAI: Hungarians are generally very Hungary-centric, seeing the country as more important internationally than it probably is. And even though most of us in the government did not share that view, we nonetheless believed that what we were doing was the most important event taking place in the world at that time.

We all took for granted that the Revolution would have a tremendous impact on the future of Europe, and for that reason alone we expected Western diplomatic support. It was simply unimaginable to me that the United States would oppose its own allies in Egypt but fail to oppose the Soviet Union in Hungary.

As far as Dulles' position on Eastern Europe was concerned, I felt that his call for liberation was intended for the American public and not as government policy. On the other hand, we were well aware that in 1949, when Stalin was doing everything in his power to overthrow Tito, including massing Soviet, Hungarian, Romanian, and Bulgarian troops on the borders of Yugoslavia, the Americans gave assistance to Tito. So the United States had shown itself willing to support Communists if necessary, which had been a very smart policy. That was part of our thinking.

SWARTZ: But Yugoslavia was geographically accessible, whereas Hungary was much more difficult to reach.

HELTAI: The point is that Eisenhower didn't see the situation clearly. As a military man he had a very proper fear of war, but the situation in 1956 was not one that was likely to result in nuclear war. There was room for American diplomatic pressure.

SWARTZ: Did you ever come across any evidence of US intelligence activity in Hungary in support of the Revolution?

HELTAI: Never, and I wish that someone had shown more interest in us. But the CIA was no worse than their British counterparts. Later, when I was in Brussels, I met American diplomats who had been involved in East European affairs (a few of whom were CIA), and they told me that there was really very little the CIA could have done in Hungary.

What bothered me most was the apparent indifference to Hungary on the part of the Western intelligence-gathering organs. When I was released from prison, for example, I was awarded my back pay by the government,

and I wanted to use the extra money to buy a foreign car. So I went to the Western embassies, where I knew that people would occasionally sell good cars. The British consul had a car he was willing to sell, and the two of us spent the better part of a month haggling over the price and testing the car in the streets of Budapest.

After our drives the consul would invite me into the embassy for tea, where we would be joined by three or four other embassy officials. This began in September 1956, when it was already well known that I was a close friend of Imre Nagy. But despite that, and despite the fact that I was in the British embassy several times, I was never asked anything about Nagy, about the plans of his followers, or about the strength of our group. Even after the reburial of Rajk, when the power of our movement had to have been obvious, the British still showed no interest in asking my views of what was going on.

APPENDIX G:

INTERVIEW WITH PAUL B. HENZE

Washington, DC: June 5, 1986

- SWARTZ: Mr. Henze, what was your official position at the time of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution?
- HENZE: I was the Deputy Political Advisor at Radio Free Europe in Munich. Following the Hungarian Revolution, I was the one who did the immediate post-mortem evaluation of the impact of Radio Free Europe on the events in Hungary. Most of the results of that evaluation are available in a book called Voices Through the Curtain, written by Alan Michie, Deputy Director of Radio Free Europe in 1956 and a former journalist.
- SWARTZ: The State Department cables coming out of Munich at the time often speculated on possible rifts in the Soviet leadership and on other matters unrelated to Bavaria. Were those cables drawn from RFE analyses?
- HENZE: By the mid-1950's, Radio Free Europe was producing a lot of data and analyses on Eastern Europe, and the Consul General in Munich, Edward Page, certainly drew on it. I doubt that the Consulate had much of an analytical capability of its own, although Page himself had a background in Soviet affairs.
- SWARTZ: Were RFE's cables to Washington part of the State Department cabling system?
- HENZE: No, we operated completely independently. RFE analyses were available to anybody who had reason to need them, obviously including anyone in the American government, but also in the German government, and for journalists and academics. However the US Consul General had an arrangement whereby he got the same basic information every day that RFE was receiving.
- SWARTZ: Was Radio Free Europe located in the same quarters as Radio Liberation?
- HENZE: No, the two organizations were completely separate. Radio Liberation, later Radio Liberty, was in a very early phase; it had almost no analytical capability, and was not keeping a very extensive broadcasting schedule either. RFE had its own quite substantial analytical capability regarding Soviet affairs, run by Herb Ritvo. Our analyses of Soviet affairs were already widely read and respected, certainly much more so than anything Radio Liberty was doing at that time.

SWARTZ: Were RFE analyses of Soviet and East European affairs routinely plugged into US National Intelligence Estimates?

HENZE: RFE output was available to intelligence liaison people in Munich, and I presume was forwarded by them to intelligence people in Washington. At that time a very large proportion of the intelligence available to the United States government on Eastern Europe derived from RFE.

SWARTZ: What was the institutional relationship between Radio Free Europe and the CIA?

HENZE: There was no direct analytical relationship whatsoever. Our relationship was entirely cooperative: the CIA was entitled to have RFE material whenever they desired, but there was no organizational mechanism for the provision of information from CIA to RFE and there was no coordination of analysis in Munich.

SWARTZ: What was the financial relationship?

HENZE: Much of the funding to support Radio Free Europe came from the CIA, which was not generally known at the time, but which became known in the early 1970's. Following the outbreak of the Korean War there had been a tremendous push in Washington to do something to help people opposing Communism, and it was at that point that the CIA started funding Free Europe operations. There was just nowhere else to get those quantities of money, though some funds were raised through the Crusade for Freedom campaign. What was involved was an administrative relationship, however, and had nothing to do with control over broadcast content.

SWARTZ: Did the Director of RFE answer in any way to Allen Dulles, the Director of the CIA?

HENZE: No, he answered to the Free Europe Committee in New York, which was a private corporation. Those people answered to people in the CIA only as far as financial arrangements were concerned. The Free Europe Committee was a private organization, although as I said a large share of its money came out of the CIA budget.

SWARTZ: Was RFE ever associated with the Voice of America?

HENZE: The Voice was founded in 1949, and has always operated as part of the United States Information Agency. As I recall, VOA had a very large programming unit in Munich, which existed independently of us. By 1956, though, I think that VOA operations in Munich were being downgraded.

Radio Free Europe's broadcasts were not in any day-to-day fashion directed or manipulated by anyone in Washington. On the other hand, those of us in Munich in charge of policy were extremely mindful of the impact the broadcasts could have and of the necessity of keeping in tune with the basic principles of US foreign policy. So were the management and members of the board of directors of the Free Europe Committee in New York. These men all had their Washington contacts with State, CIA, and the White House, and they had no desire to try to free-wheel (though some among them may have been more activist in certain directions than others).

SWARTZ: Earlier in the 1950's, had Radio Free Europe been involved in the program of sending balloons with leaflets into Eastern Europe?

HENZE: The balloon program was conducted by the Free Europe Press, a separate division of the Free Europe Committee. It was people in the Free Europe Press, not in RFE, who developed the idea and then carried it out; the idea was to coordinate the written word with the radio broadcasts. Today the idea of sending balloons over the iron curtain sounds ludicrous, but in the 1950's it was remarkably effective. The leaflets could be delivered with a good deal of accuracy, although the impact of the operation in Hungary was probably less marked than it was in Poland or Czechoslovakia.

The whole thing was a bit like an insect laying eggs - if you sent out enough, some were bound to be found. But there were some remarkable successes during the period. On one occasion, during a major sports rally in Prague, the balloons floated over and dropped leaflets right into the stadium. That had not been planned, of course; we found out only much later, from emigrés, exactly where the leaflets had landed.

SWARTZ: When did the balloon operation begin?

HENZE: It began in 1953 to Czechoslovakia and in 1954, I believe, to Hungary. Hungary was much more difficult to reach, since it was more distant and required passing the balloons over Austria. The material that was launched by balloon was very carefully developed, practically a small newspaper. The content was informative and not agitational, and very exacting standards of accuracy were applied.

However, other people - exile organizations of various kinds, CIA people, West European intelligence people, and even certain religious organizations - were also in the balloon business. So a lot of what has been written about the balloon program does not refer to the Free

Europe Committee or to RFE. The Free Europe balloon operation, by the way, like the RFE radio broadcasts, was conducted with the full knowledge and support of the West German government. I might add that throughout all the Free Europe operations the view was very negative toward anything that might be agitational or pointlessly adventuresome.

SWARTZ: Were you ever familiar with any CIA or West European operations to train emigrés from Eastern Europe in intelligence techniques and send them back into their homelands?

HENZE: I believe that there were military programs roughly along those lines, but they usually sounded much more impressive than they really were. Beginning with the Korean War there was a great deal of emphasis in the government on organizing for the possibility of war in Europe, which seemed like a very real prospect. So the US military set up a special facility at a place called Bad Tölz, south of Munich, for the training of commando units made up of East European emigrés. A great amount of effort was put into the program, but I don't know whether it ever added up to anything significant.

SWARTZ: To your knowledge, how closely did John Foster Dulles' and others' call for the liberation of Eastern Europe result in tangible government policies to achieve that goal?

HENZE: Eastern Europe was an area toward which American policy in the 1950's was to a high degree simply improvised. The Korean War left the impression that the Soviets were planning aggression in a great many places (after all, the Berlin blockade was not that far behind), while at the same time the Communist parties of Eastern Europe were going through a process of purges and turmoil.

This led to a great deal of frustration and ferment in US government circles, but also to a great deal of activist thinking. The Eisenhower administration, in particular, came in on a wave of activist thinking, calling for the "Rollback" of Communism, American support for revolts in Eastern Europe, and so on. I remember that when I arrived at RFE in 1952 I thought through my own evacuation plan in case the Russians started coming in - a great many people thought in those terms at that time.

East European emigrés in this period (1952) still thought of Communist power in their countries as being something very short-term, which simply couldn't last. Then in the wake of Stalin's death there was confusion in Eastern Europe, with the revolts in Berlin and Pilsen

and the declaration of the New Course in Hungary. But the expectation among emigrés into 1953 remained that the Communist occupation of Eastern Europe would be like the Nazi occupation of Western Europe, that it would eventually all come tumbling down. Nobody was sure just how it would happen; there might even have to be war, but the Communist occupation would come to an end.

SWARTZ: Was that the view within RFE as well?

HENZE: No. Within RFE a different set of ideas had evolved, particularly with respect to broadcasting. In simplest terms it was "gradualism," the art of the possible. I think that to understand the evolution of that policy, however, it's necessary to go back a few years first.

In the late 1940's, people in the State Department became increasingly frustrated with the "leftovers" of World War II, so in 1948 the Free Europe Committee was established, chiefly as a means to get all the miscellaneous East European emigrés and governments-in-exile off State's back. Eventually plans were developed to give the emigrés a radio station just to keep them busy. As time went on, the State Department, which had never been much interested in broadcasting in the first place, became less and less interested in what the Free Europe Committee was doing. Very little thought in State went into the question of just what sorts of things were to be broadcast by RFE; it was assumed that emigré broadcasts to their homelands somehow in and of themselves would achieve results.

On the Fourth of July, 1950, Radio Free Europe first went on the air, but largely only symbolically, as the transmitters were still very weak. The radio station had been planned for some time, but was given urgent attention only after the outbreak of the Korean War. Suddenly everything possible was done to get a full-scale Czechoslovak service on the air by May 1, 1951, and a Hungarian service by Autumn 1951.

The President of the Free Europe Committee, C. D. Jackson, an eminent figure in the Time-Life empire and a vocal activist as far as Eastern Europe was concerned (and after 1952 one of the leading assistants to President Eisenhower), came to Munich for the inauguration of RFE's Czechoslovak service, which was to be headed by a famous Czech journalist named Ferdinand Peroutka, who had been one of his country's best known columnists in the inter-war period. In officially dedicating the new station, C. D. Jackson said, "Mr. Peroutka, we give you this radio station," a statement which became the subject of enormous controversy in later years. We weren't giving the Czechs the station,

of course, but were keeping it at all times under tight American control.

Many people wanted RFE to broadcast a line of "the worse, the better," to tell listeners in Eastern Europe how bad things were under Communism. Peroutka's "Saturday Evening Commentary," for example, was often very agitational. But by the time I got to Munich (late 1952), the principle had already been established that such texts would be reviewed before being broadcast. And by the summer of 1953 the policy of Radio Free Europe had become one of "gradualism." From then on, RFE broadcasts aimed not to remind listeners about how bad things were, but to provide as much information as possible about what was going on throughout Eastern Europe and the world as a whole.

One of the most important things that we learned from these early broadcasts was the fact that East Europeans were extremely isolated from one another. Czechs, for example, had very little idea of what was going on in, say, Poland; of course, this is a characteristic of Eastern Europe which goes back several centuries. East Europeans have always been oriented outwardly, toward the West, not laterally, toward the other countries of Eastern Europe.

SWARTZ: Well, the East European regimes were never so preoccupied with the West that they failed to make claims against their neighbors in Eastern Europe.

HENZE: That was one of the early problems that RFE faced. Our Slovak commentators wanted to denounce the Hungarians, the Bulgarians wanted to blast the Yugoslavs, and so on. And many would try to sneak anti-Semitic remarks onto the air. So we really had our hands full.

But none of this was known in the States; most people in Washington didn't understand what was going on at RFE. In 1953 we had a hellish time with activist-minded Republicans in Congress who claimed that we were broadcasting socialism and capitulationism. We were accused of having too many Social Democrats and not enough anti-Communists, despite the fact that many of the Social Democrats were more anti-Communist than anyone.

At the same time, within the RFE sections for each East European country we had to contend with competing political groups: the Hungarian section included Socialists, centrists, Horthyists and former Arrow Cross members, while the Czechoslovak section boasted leftists, moderates, Tiso supporters and other Slovaks

(not to mention competing Czechs and Slovaks). It was the same with every section.

So because being part of Radio Free Europe forced all of these different groups to rub together, and broadcast twelve to sixteen hours a day to each of these countries, thinking in Munich about the questions of Eastern Europe evolved much more rapidly than in any of the US government departments in Washington. Of course, this is a phenomenon that frequently occurs in complex processes - the "field" is often ahead of "headquarters."

Moreover, the balloon operation brought many creative people into the picture, notably Sam Walker, a friend of C. D. Jackson who was head of the Free Europe Press. The care and effort spent in preparing the balloon leaflets (you couldn't just tell people how bad things were - you had to imply viable types of passive resistance) eventually spilled over into the broadcasting element as well.

SWARTZ: How did all these changes affect RFE broadcasts to Hungary?

HENZE: After 1953, the policy of offering East Europeans constructive ways to resist the Communist regimes became especially relevant to our broadcasts to Hungary. The leaflets which were sent by balloon to Hungary in effect advocated the New Course, and the same principles were then applied to radio, facilitated by the fact that the Hungarians at RFE were very creative.

SWARTZ: In the aftermath of the 1956 Revolution, however, it was alleged that RFE had not restricted itself simply to providing information or to encouraging limited reforms but instead had broadcast agitational material.

HENZE: In Hungary, unlike in Poland, the whole country fell out of the control of the Party and state apparatus; throughout Hungary power came to be held by widely dispersed and disconnected small groups of people. Therefore I think that what Radio Free Europe broadcasts did or didn't say during the course of the Revolution is of much less significance than the fact that during the Revolution RFE served as a relay for the hundreds of small radio stations that suddenly appeared on the air throughout Hungary. Every small town that had any conceivable radio transmission capability - in some cases only police stations or AVO facilities - went on the air as a freedom station. RFE monitors in Germany recorded what was said by these small stations, and the information was relayed back to Hungary by our Hungarian service. A station in Győr or Szeged, for example,

might be able to be heard only in its immediate vicinity, but because of RFE's broadcasts, all of Hungary learned what was happening in those cities.

Concerning the content of RFE broadcasts, in November we conducted an extensive post-mortem evaluation (which I headed up), in which we went over all the scripts and transmissions of what the Hungarian service had broadcast during the Revolution. We were able to conclude that very few of our broadcasts were agitational. One of the few which was agitational, as I recall, was a piece by our military commentator, a former Hungarian colonel, in which he gave recipes for Molotov cocktails. But that sort of thing was very rare. Still, the Hungarian Revolution was quite a traumatic experience for Radio Free Europe.

SWARTZ: Béla Király, who headed Hungarian military resistance to the Soviets after November 4, claims that RFE called him by name over the air and urged him to keep fighting.

HENZE: I don't recall anything of that sort, but without going over all our broadcasts I couldn't be sure. I might mention, however, that RFE was not the only station broadcasting to Hungary at the time: there were clandestine Hungarian exile broadcasts, broadcasts by Hungarian emigrés over West European services, and of course BBC and VOA. So listeners in Hungary might have heard something over the air and just assumed it was RFE.

SWARTZ: Is it true that RFE broadcasts belittled Imre Nagy as "just another Communist?"

HENZE: I suppose it's possible that some broadcasters said things along those lines, though that certainly was not RFE policy. But if you're going to have a certain amount of diversity within your radio service, there are bound to be statements like that. The principle by which we operated was that we wanted diversity and differences of opinion in our broadcasts, in order to promote thinking and discussion on a given issue. We didn't want endlessly to repeat some rigid dogma.

SWARTZ: Was your post-mortem assessment accepted?

HENZE: Yes, and I think it was the only thorough evaluation ever made. The Germans may have compiled some sort of broadcast survey, but I don't know what was done with their report, if one was made.

APPENDIX H:

INTERVIEW WITH GAZA KATONA

Falls Church, VA: August 4, 1986

SWARTZ: Mr. Katona, how long were you with the US Legation in Budapest?

KATONA: I was there for four and a half years, from the middle of 1953 to the end of 1957; during that period I was the Assistant Political Officer. Since I spoke Hungarian (one of the main reasons I was assigned to Budapest), my main task was to head up the Legation's translation section, which consisted of three Hungarian nationals who went through the Hungarian newspapers and other publications each day. They would point out what they considered to be the most important articles, and I would review what they had selected, along with any which I had also flagged for translation.

SWARTZ: Did you have any personal contacts within the Hungarian regime?

KATONA: Because our mission was so small, I was usually invited to the various diplomatic get-togethers despite my lower position, and occasionally the important political figures in Hungary would attend these functions. I remember one reception at the Yugoslav Embassy which Rákosi, Imre Nagy, and Andropov (then Soviet Ambassador to Hungary) all attended. That was the period in which the Soviets permitted their wives to attend diplomatic functions, so we spent much of our time talking with the ladies, occasionally ferreting out something of interest.

SWARTZ: Did the Communist diplomats make an effort to avoid Americans at these affairs?

KATONA: Not too much, especially in the more relaxed post-Stalin atmosphere, and because they were usually the hosts; there would always be quite a preponderance of Communist officials, and after enough of these functions you would learn whom you might be able to speak with. Usually the conversations would be limited to mundane topics, but at times there were also useful exchanges on political issues. I got to know a couple of Hungarian Foreign Ministry officials, but very few of them would ever give a straightforward answer.

What coups I got were not from people at diplomatic receptions but from ad hoc visitors to the Legation and contacts with the general public. To cite one case, a

Hungarian who was ostensibly a correspondent for a Swiss magazine would come by and ask if he could pick up a copy of the New York Times; it turned out he was actually a provocateur from the AVH, but occasionally he nonetheless had some interesting things to say. For example, I remember that he told me that Rákosi was going to resign about two hours before the official announcement. During the Revolution he defected from the AVH, after which he made his way to Austria and eventually ended up in West Germany.

SWARTZ: Do you recall ever receiving instructions from the State Department directing you to take steps which would in some way expedite the liberation of Eastern Europe?

KATONA: The State Department never had a clear policy on this question, and there were no cables calling for the sort of thing that you're talking about. However, it was my impression - based upon briefings that I had with Defense Department, FBI, and overt CIA people during my stay in Washington in 1955 - that within other government circles there was an ongoing interest in intervening in Eastern Europe should the situation arise.

At the same time, though, it seemed to me that most people in Washington felt that a major revolution in Eastern Europe was extremely unlikely. I remember one official telling me that there could not be an anti-Soviet uprising in Hungary, because - unlike in Yugoslavia - there was no rough terrain in which partisans could hide and where protracted resistance to occupation could be effectively carried out. I pointed out that in 1848 the Hungarians had rebelled against the Austrians and had fought the Russians, but he wasn't impressed.

SWARTZ: But you found more adherents to the idea of Rollback (whatever their short-term skepticism) in agencies other than the State Department?

KATONA: Yes, I would say so, but that might have been only because the other government departments were not responsible for conducting foreign policy or for accounting to the public. Being peripheral, these people could get away with a lot of things which the State Department - the central spokesman and actor in this area - could not.

At the Legation in Budapest it was our view that the US would not play much of a role in Eastern Europe unless the satellites themselves took the initiative. But large parts of the Hungarian populace, listening to RFE or VOA and taking a lot for granted, felt that once

things got started, the United States would support their effort in some concrete manner.

SWARTZ: What did you expect the US to do during the crisis?

KATONA: I thought that we would intervene in some form, although not necessarily incursive military liberation. I felt it was incumbent upon us to take action indicating strong interest in what was happening in Hungary, for example by visibly amassing troops in West Germany.

SWARTZ: Why was the Minister, Christian M. Ravndal, recalled to Washington just before the crisis broke out?

KATONA: He wasn't recalled; it was only that the period of his assignment in Hungary had reached its end in August. It's unfortunate that he wasn't there in October, because he might have been able to bring about more positive American action. Ravndal's views carried a lot of weight in the State Department, whereas the Chargé, though he did his best, was not as forceful or influential.

SWARTZ: Given the ferment in Hungary in August, why didn't the State Department just instruct Ravndal to remain at his post until a successor could arrive?

KATONA: There was a good amount of turmoil in August, but not nearly enough, in the view of the State Department, to expect that there would be a full-scale revolution. In fact only two days before the Revolution, although by then there was a certain sense in Hungary that something "had to give," my wife and I still felt able to make a trip to Vienna and leave our children with friends in Budapest. But the longer we stayed in Vienna, the more nervous I got, and I remember remarking to some of the officers in the Embassy in Vienna that things were about to break in Hungary.

In a way, I didn't really feel surprised when the Revolution broke out, because I had been asking myself for a long time, "When is something going to happen? Something has to happen."

SWARTZ: Through the summer of 1956, were there any meetings by anyone from the Legation with Imre Nagy or his people to encourage them, or perhaps to say that the United States stood behind them?

KATONA: We wouldn't have done anything like that, first because our contacts with the Hungarian government were on a formal level, and secondly because Imre Nagy was still very much regarded as a Communist, even though he was part of a so-called "opposition" within the Hungarian

Party. I remember that during the Revolution a huge crowd gathered with makeshift torches outside the Parliament building and called for Nagy to come out and speak. But when he did, he began by saying, "Comrades!" And everybody hollered back, "There are no more comrades here!" At that point Nagy realized that the Revolution was not a case of the people wanting a different type of Communism; they didn't want Communism at all, period.

Prior to the Revolution, though, we didn't have any contact with the people in Nagy's group, only with some of the intelligentsia. Most of our contacts were official ones, made through the Hungarian Foreign Office.

SWARTZ: Did the Legation ever receive instructions from Washington to make contact with the Nagy opposition?

KATONA: There were no directives specifically on that, but we were expected to report on what we thought was likely to happen in Hungary.

SWARTZ: What sort of instructions did you get from Washington in the period prior to the Revolution?

KATONA: There were always general requirements on which Washington wanted to be kept posted, such as the changing composition of the Hungarian leadership, the performance of the economy, the strength of the regime, the extent of dissent, and so on. Obviously, Washington was interested in anything that suggested splits within the Hungarian Party, but I don't recall any specific queries about whether we thought the regime was going to be able to stay in power at all.

SWARTZ: As far as splits within the Party were concerned, were your instructions merely to identify those splits, or to try to encourage them as well?

KATONA: If it was American policy to enhance the position of the Hungarian opposition or somehow to exploit the situation, it must have taken the form of covert action, because I do not recall our having received any instructions along those lines.

SWARTZ: What do you feel that the United States could have done to have made Nagy's position's stronger?

KATONA: While Nagy had been Premier we could have increased our economic aid to Hungary (in fact in 1955 we did, when there was a major flood in Hungary). I think that we should have done more to try to build Nagy up.

SWARTZ: Was it your impression that there were people in Washington working to do just the opposite - to undermine the efforts of the reformers in Hungary - in order to be able to portray Communism as always repressive and Stalinist?

KATONA: No, I never got that impression. The few people in Washington who were familiar with Imre Nagy felt that we should do what we could to support him, if only to increase the splits within the Hungarian government.

SWARTZ: Did you see any major changes in Hungary following the Soviet withdrawal from Austria in 1955?

KATONA: Naturally, new fortifications and controls were put up along the Austro-Hungarian border. Within Hungary people were saying, "Well, at least the Soviets have pulled back a little. They haven't gotten out of our own yard yet, but at least they've gotten out of our neighbor's." So Hungarians' hopes for a Soviet withdrawal were raised, but more like a remote dream than a realistic possibility.

SWARTZ: Did you, as an American diplomat, think at the time that the Soviets might conceivably withdraw from Hungary?

KATONA: No, nobody who was familiar with Soviet policy from the end of World War II expected a pullout. For one thing, there was simply no pressure on the Soviets to withdraw. And from what I saw of the Soviet military presence in Hungary, they gave the impression that they were there to stay.

SWARTZ: During the 1956 Revolution, however, did you ever feel there was a point at which the Soviets might have been prepared to withdraw from the country?

KATONA: Following the initial licking that the Soviets took, I felt that they were undecided about what to do and that they might have been considering a withdrawal. After all, unorganized Hungarians had unexpectedly risen up and demolished Soviet tanks, the Soviets' own troops were reluctant to fight, and the other satellites were on the verge of rising up as well.

There were rumors that the Soviets were so worried that things were getting out of control in Hungary that Mikoyan ordered Nagy at gun point to sign documents recanting some of his earlier stands (but Nagy refused).

SWARTZ: What sorts of diplomatic steps do feel that the US could have taken in support of the Imre Nagy regime?

KATONA: The first thing that the United States should have done should have been to put forward anti-Soviet and pro-Nagy resolutions at the UN, and then to call on the UN to send a delegation to Hungary. More than at any other time, the Russians would have been amenable: when the Russians are on their knees they'll listen to you, but if you never put any pressure on them then they'll take you over lock, stock, and barrel.

We also could have taken economic steps. We could have used some of those RFE balloons that had been dropping propaganda leaflets into Hungary to drop food. A few thousand boxes of Lipton soup mix, for example, would have let the population know that this technique was not just a self-serving gesture. It might not have solved Hungary's food problem, but as a symbolic demonstration of American support it would have given the Hungarians a big psychological lift. And we could have sent packets of regular first aid supplies too.

SWARTZ: What other forms of diplomatic pressure could the United States have taken? For example, could we somehow publicly have supported Hungary's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact?

KATONA: We certainly could have been more active in the United Nations. After all, the Hungarians sent Hammarskjöld a telegram informing the UN of their withdrawal from the Pact and requesting that the UN take up the issue. But I remember that one US Congressman, Feighan, claimed to have seen a cable to Yugoslavia in which the United States pledged not to do anything to upset the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe.

SWARTZ: Whether or not such a cable was sent, Feighan's claim has a certain credibility, since during the Revolution the United States acted in a way which seemed to accept Soviet domination of Eastern Europe. John Foster Dulles said in a major speech in Dallas that the United States did not view Poland or Hungary as potential military allies, seemingly assuring the Soviets that they would have a free hand in Hungary to do as they wished.

KATONA: I guess people in Washington were thinking in terms of preserving Soviet-American relations, and were trying their best to avoid exacerbating the situation. Even before the Revolution, for example, the logic seems to have been that the less said by American officials about the questionable legal status of Soviet troops in Hungary, the better. The thinking in Washington may have been that the US would have the best chance of getting Soviet troops out of Hungary by working "behind the scenes." So when the Soviets showed their true colors during the Revolution, we urged Washington to

make more of an issue of the Soviet military presence in Hungary.

But the biggest problem we had was probably that there was no one in Washington who could give us immediate responses. When we recommended that certain Presidential pronouncements be made, or suggested various courses of action, there was no timely answer. Apparently there were just too many people to consult and offices to check with, and not enough time to communicate adequately.

Another aspect of the problem was the technical, or operational, difficulties which cropped up at critical times. Since our encoded messages were normally transmitted via MTI (the Hungarian Telegraph Agency), we experienced delays in receiving or sending cables during electrical interruptions or breakdowns due to heavy fighting in the streets. We did manage to establish an open Telex connection between the Legation and Washington to facilitate routine information, but for obvious reasons this could be used only for non-sensitive messages. The Army Attaché's office was able to set up a small transmitter which was operated clandestinely for a brief period before the Soviet monitors picked up the traffic and protested, through the Hungarian Foreign Office, our use of this facility.

One thing Washington did instruct us on was how to deal with the delegations and groups that kept coming to the Legation to plead for American support. At one point there was a whole sea of people in front of our building, and - as per instructions - Anton Nyerger and I stood out on the balcony and told the crowd (in Hungarian) that we were aware of what was happening in Hungary, that we shared concern for the Hungarians, and that we were keeping Washington apprised of the situation.

SWARTZ: And the people accepted that?

KATONA: More or less. But what could they say? We said that we felt for them, but we couldn't very well express support in specific terms or details. On one occasion, I think it was October 25, a couple of tanks that the freedom fighters somehow had managed to capture or obtain from the Soviets rolled past the Legation on their way to Parliament (about two blocks away), with a number of freedom fighters triumphantly riding on top, waving Hungarian flags. As we looked out upon this scene, the Chargé told us to keep a low profile, to close the blinds and pretend to ignore what was going on outside. I thought to myself that this was a hell of a way to let the Hungarians know how Americans felt, so I ran up to

the third floor, flung open the balcony window, and waved a long red, white, and green ribbon. I just wanted to let the people know that we were with them.

SWARTZ: Did the Imre Nagy regime ever get in contact with the Legation regarding American diplomatic support?

KATONA: I don't recall any such contacts, at least not between October 23 and November 3. Nagy's government had problems getting organized and deciding what they wanted to do; they may never have been in a position to ask anything of us. We knew exactly which people in the Foreign Office dealt with the United States, and there was no attempt on their part to set up a meeting or to discuss the situation with anyone from the Legation.

SWARTZ: On the other hand, did Legation personnel try to set up meetings with Imre Nagy or with any of his top officials?

KATONA: We couldn't have reached any of them, due to the large number of anti-American subordinates who still "ruled the roost" and stood in the way. Even toward the end of the Revolution, there were plenty of old-line Communists still staffing the government ministries. It would have been just about impossible to get to Nagy.

For example, the fellow at the Foreign Ministry who took our encoded cables for transmission to the States (our own transmission capability was down) was communist through and through, as was most of the Hungarian delegation to the United Nations. In fact, Dr. Péter Kós, an old-line Hungarian Communist who had been in the Foreign Ministry for years, was actually a Soviet citizen named Leo Konduktorov.

However, we were in contact with quite a few important Hungarians, although they could not represent the government. On November 4, István Bibó, a prominent Hungarian intellectual who was Minister without Portfolio in Nagy's cabinet, came into the Legation and wrote a treatise on the Revolution and on what should be Hungary's role in the world. Later other writers stopped by as well.

SWARTZ: Were you authorized to grant them asylum?

KATONA: We had permission to give only Cardinal Mindszenty asylum. (Believe it or not, the cable authorizing the Legation to admit Mindszenty arrived at almost the exact instant that the Cardinal appeared at the Legation's doorstep). However, in order to protect this special status in the case of the Cardinal, we were not permitted to grant the same privilege to any other non-

Americans seeking refuge in our facility. This was the situation with Béla Kovács, former head of the Smallholders Party, who requested safe haven with us during the second Soviet assault. Unfortunately, as much as we sympathized with his plight, we had to turn him down after a one-night lodging on our premises.

APPENDIX I:

INTERVIEW WITH BELA KIRALY

Highland Lakes, NJ: December 23, 1985

SWARTZ: Professor, what was your position at the time of the Revolution?

KIRALY: I had just come out of jail. I had been imprisoned for five years before the Revolution. I came out in September and tried to reenter society, find friends, find clothes, find a place to live. Before the Revolution I had no contact with foreigners, just my with friends and with Imre Nagy's group, who had adopted me.

SWARTZ: While in prison, did you have any idea of what was going on outside?

KIRALY: Sometimes new prisoners came in and brought news, but the news in the prison was always a year and a half old. Things changed rapidly after Stalin's death, though. In the summer of 1953 there were already visitors again, letters and exchanges with our families, and newspapers smuggled in by the guards. But I still remained in the "Ghetto" - I couldn't have visitors or correspondence. Only 100 or 200 others were in that situation, however; the rest of the political prisoners could have visitors.

SWARTZ: What were you charged with at the time of your arrest?

KIRALY: I was arrested while I was Commandant of the Hungarian General Staff school. The charges were completely ridiculous: I was accused of being an American spy, sabotaging the training of officers, carrying out subversion, and organizing underground to overthrow the regime. Any one of the charges would have been enough to hang me five times.

SWARTZ: Why do you think they chose you?

KIRALY: When I was arrested, in August 1951, the "General Trials" were already over, and it seems to me that in my officer training position, which was not a strategic or political position, I might have survived, since I did the professional work perfectly, without a hitch. But one day a Soviet advisor, a certain Colonel Voloshin, arrived (directly from Moscow) and was introduced to me as a tactical advisor. In fact he was the representative of the KGB or the Soviet Party, delegated to oversee that the military training in Hungary was not only professionally perfect but completely Marxist-

Leninist and above all unwaveringly loyal to the Soviet Union. That meant that even though he found that I did as good a job professionally as anyone could, he tested my loyalty to the Soviet Union in such a primitive way that it was impossible to pass with flying colors. And then he arranged my arrest.

SWARTZ: Did Voloshin remain in Hungary long?

KIRALY: He was in Hungary for two or three years. On one occasion he charged my best friend, the head of the academy's military geography department, with spreading anti-Soviet propaganda. His proof was unbelievably silly and undignified, just a totally primitive thing.

SWARTZ: Is it true that Pál Maléter was one of your students?

KIRALY: Yes, but only in the one-year course. He graduated and earned the rank of Colonel, which he held from 1950 to 1956. He was a good student, but what is important to note is that right up to the very last moment he was a very good loyal Communist. He never changed his mind in that respect.

SWARTZ: How did you attain your position during the Revolution?

KIRALY: When I came out of prison Imre Nagy was completely out of power. However, there was a large group of Nagy's followers, which had been attracting people to them with their ideas; the Nagy group shouldn't really be considered an underground, though, since their activities were completely out in the open, under the eyes of the Party and police. It was a time of fermentation in Hungary, and a certain amount of liberalization had already been accepted; the very fact that Imre Nagy and his friends could hold meetings was a sign that the regime was already no longer Stalinist. Nevertheless there still were always secret police just around the corner, watching what was going on.

A few weeks after I had gotten out of prison, three of my former colleagues, who had also been purged from the army, visited me and told me that on behalf of Imre Nagy they wished to know whether I would be interested in going back into the army if they could arrange it. What had happened was that in all state institutions, even the police, there were already rehabilitated formerly purged officers back in their positions; but there were two institutions which the Nagy group could not penetrate (not in the sense of underground or subversive activities - after all, they were all Communists - but as a reform movement, or as national communism), namely the army and the secret police.

So I was asked whether I would be willing to be the first to be pushed back into the army, to get inside and try to pull others in, and I said yes. But I told them that I would do so only on the condition that I not have to reenter the Communist Party. They told me that it was absolutely all right, that there was no such requirement. In contrast, they did not want to put anybody into the secret police because they intended to abolish it altogether if Imre Nagy ever got into power.

SWARTZ: Did you meet personally with Imre Nagy before going back into the army?

KIRALY: Nagy's supporters arranged a half-hour meeting for me with him in mid-October, which took place at the ceremonial reburial of the six generals who were executed in 1950. A more substantive meeting was planned, but in the meantime the Revolution broke out.

SWARTZ: As far as you know, did Nagy or anyone around him have any idea that a revolution was about to erupt?

KIRALY: No, nobody knew what was about to happen, neither the Stalinists nor the reformers. Imre Nagy's group wanted the Revolution the least of anyone, because it ruined everything. They were reformers, not revolutionaries: they did not create the Revolution, they did not push for it, they did not want it. It saddened them. Imre Nagy did not know what to do with it. It was completely against his character, plans, and purpose.

SWARTZ: Did Imre Nagy and his group expect more of a Polish scenario, something more like what Gomulka was trying to do?

KIRALY: Absolutely, step by step. But Imre Nagy would have gone much farther than Gomulka. Gomulka was too doctrinaire, and was eventually pushed out of power because he was too rigid. Nagy was a scholar and a professor. All the others - Gomulka, Dubcek, Jaruzelski - are just apparatchiks, of the establishment. Imre Nagy was also part of the establishment, no question about it, but he always a little bit out of step from the absolute uniformness that the Stalinists maintained; he was always had that independent thought.

And there was another thing - I believe that none of these apparatchiks was as much of a patriot as Nagy. The Hungarian Stalinists had very little in common with their countrymen who spoke the same language. Take Gerő for example. Gerő was a lifelong member of the Comintern, whose whole life was tied up with the world communist organization, in which Hungary was just a little tiny dot.

Gerő, in fact, was Stalin's "man in Hungary." Of all the Hungarian leaders, only Gerő had the right to phone Stalin directly (which he would do, of course, only in important matters - such as whether or not someone was to be hanged). Rákosi had not been Stalin's first choice as First Secretary of the Hungarian Party; rather, Stalin found Rákosi expedient because as a victim of the Horthy regime Rákosi was popular with the West European leftists.

SWARTZ: Yet Rákosi remained First Secretary long after Soviet relations with Western Europe had totally deteriorated.

KIRALY: Rákosi never wielded complete power. It was the group of Rákosi, Gerő, Farkas, and Révai which held the real power, not Rákosi alone. It was one of the earliest "collective leaderships." Rákosi could not take any major steps without first checking with Gerő or the others. In fact, Rákosi was much more afraid of Stalin than were the other three.

SWARTZ: Did Gerő have any special ties with Tito stemming from their days in the Comintern?

KIRALY: Gerő and Tito certainly worked together in the Comintern, but that doesn't mean that in 1948 Gerő would hesitate one bit to denounce Tito. Gerő always did exactly what the international communist movement required. Imre Nagy was the one who was different. Imre Nagy was a patriot.

SWARTZ: Was that why Nagy withdrew Hungary from the Warsaw Pact?

KIRALY: The most important point here is this: the declaration of neutrality did not cause the Soviet intervention, but was in fact a result of the intervention. The Soviet intervention began on the night of October 31/November 1, when columns of Soviet troops poured into the country. Imre Nagy tried to protest, and begged the Soviets to stop the whole thing, but the intervention had already been decided upon. The declaration of neutrality was an effort to dramatize for the whole world how absolutely illegal the Soviet intervention was. The idea was that for the Soviets to carry out aggression against an ally (as with Czechoslovakia twelve years later) would be bad enough, but to carry out aggression against a declared neutral state would wake up the world. That was Nagy's thinking.

SWARTZ: Had it been one of the goals of the reformers from the start to make Hungary the next Austria, another neutral state?

KIRALY: That was the desire, an awfully great desire. There were debates - should we follow the Austrian type of neutrality or the Finnish type? But that was only a desire, like in America there is the desire that everyone should have two cars. A desire is one thing, but realpolitik is another. So although there was the desire to be absolutely independent of the Soviet Union, in the meantime there would have to be negotiation. Without the evidence of the impending Soviet invasion, the official policy of the Hungarian government would not have been neutrality. We would have loved to be neutral, but we were not a sovereign country in the proper sense of the word. Wherever Soviet garrisons sit there is no sovereignty, and we were wise enough to know what we could and could not do. But there was still that desire.

These Stalinist leaders like Rákosi would never want to have a neutral Hungary because for these bastards their own rule was secure only by Soviet domination. Imre Nagy and his supporters, on the other hand, enjoyed popularity and political acceptance, and didn't need Soviet secret police to be behind their backs to protect them. Neutrality was our desire, but Nagy was wise enough to know that we were not living in heaven or in a no-man's land but under Soviet domination. Neutrality was forced on us by the Soviet aggression. That is the paradoxical situation.

SWARTZ: Previous to that aggression, did people in Hungary genuinely believe that the Soviet Union would withdraw?

KIRALY: Genuinely hoped. There was a chance - the idea that the Hungarian Revolution was doomed from the start is totally silly. The Pravda article of October 30, which was connected to the visit of Mikoyan and Suslov to Hungary, acknowledged the Hungarian Revolution to be a popular uprising against the mistakes of the "personality cult" - they just couldn't call it Stalin. So Pravda acknowledged the Hungarian Revolution.

They say there is a psychological urge in all killers to go back to the scene of the crime. Khrushchev went back to Hungary twice, and at Csepel and Győr he told factory workers, "Comrades, in the Politburo those who not want to help you were in the majority for days. But gradually they came over and then there was a majority in the Politburo." That was a very important statement, acknowledging publicly that there was a rift in the Politburo.

They were coming under all kinds of pressure, including from China, which sympathized with the Revolution at the beginning, then declared that it had gone too far. And

in the Soviet military, Zhukov supposedly threatened to resign if action against Hungary weren't taken. The Soviet Union had only intermediate missiles at the time, and not many at that; Hungary was needed in order to keep northern Italy in check. Moreover, the Stalinists in the bloc were all scared to death: the Czechs, East Germans, and the Romanians all demanded that something be done. So even in a totalitarian machine there are pressure groups.

SWARTZ: Did you meet with Mikoyan or Suslov during their visits to Budapest?

KIRALY: No, I didn't. I just heard Imre Nagy announce on the radio that the Russians had agreed to withdraw their troops.

SWARTZ: Khrushchev writes in his memoirs that the Soviet decision to intervene was made while Mikoyan and Suslov were still in Hungary.

KIRALY: That's right. Mikoyan and Suslov might have been in their plane flying back to Moscow. But I believe that they were authorized to negotiate sincerely; they were not trying to deceive us. The Pravda article was genuine. It criticized us, but did not try to portray us as fascists or imperialists. But a week later the Soviets were accusing us of exactly that.

SWARTZ: Did you meet with Andropov?

KIRALY: Yes, when Andropov phoned Imre Nagy with the ultimatum that the Soviet Embassy was under siege by "hooligans" and that if the Hungarians were not able to safeguard the diplomatic missions' legitimate activities, then he would place the Soviet Embassy under the protection of the Soviet army. Nagy asked me, "Do you understand?" I said, "Of course I understand. He wants to bring back the Soviet troops." Then I rushed to the scene with freedom fighter forces, tanks and motorized infantry, but there was nothing there, not a single hooligan.

And then Andropov tried to deceive me, but in a very civilized way. He lied and said, "Imre Nagy misunderstood me. Why don't you call up the Prime Minister from here and ask whether the memorandum has arrived at his desk?" This memorandum recommended immediate Soviet-Hungarian negotiations on the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary. But that was all a complete fake. The negotiations were started in order to divert the Hungarians, because the aggression had already been decided upon. We started the meetings with the Soviets on November 3, and in the evening all the negotiators went back to the Soviet headquarters to

sign the already agreed-upon treaty of the withdrawal of Soviet troops. But our whole delegation was arrested.

SWARTZ: Some accounts say that General Malinin, who headed these negotiations, did not himself know that they were not to be in good faith.

KIRALY: There is a story that he was surprised when Serov came in, but how could the Soviet commanding general not know that the aggression was on? Impossible. A four-star general? Impossible!

SWARTZ: Did you have contact with any Yugoslavs during the Revolution?

KIRALY: No, but Yugoslavia was a beacon for the whole reform movement. It showed that there was a different way toward Socialism. After all, the Khrushchev trip to Belgrade showed that the Yugoslav variety of Socialism was accepted as an alternative. So if Tito - this dissident, this heretic - is accepted, why shouldn't we try to do it our way? The moral support of Yugoslavia for Imre Nagy was tremendously important for the Hungarians.

Of course, when the Soviet Union turned to armed intervention, the Yugoslavs couldn't deal with it. But in a gesture showing that the Yugoslavs were not stooges of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia still handled the refugees very sympathetically; it was as safe to go to Yugoslavia as it was to Austria.

SWARTZ: Unless you went to their embassy.

KIRALY: That is a different thing. Imre Nagy went to the Yugoslav Embassy still thinking that the Soviets would negotiate with him.

SWARTZ: Do you think he might have done better to have gone to a Western embassy?

KIRALY: Then it would have been like Mindszenty - he would have been there for twelve or fifteen years. When the Soviet invasion of November 4 was about to start, I told Nagy that we still had five small airplanes. I said, "I could skip you to Vienna with two or three members of the Cabinet." That would have been a solution, to set up some form of negotiations, not necessarily even as a government in exile. The government would go to Vienna, where they could negotiate with the Soviets. But Imre Nagy told me that he would never leave Hungary of his own free will. Of course it might have turned out to be a permanent exile, but I thought that his presence in Vienna negotiating with the United Nations or the Soviet

Union might have been possible. But he did not want to go.

There was at that time in us a utopian hope that the UN was not the copy of the League of Nations, that the UN might be a real arbitrator or something.

SWARTZ: Did anyone have any idea that Kádár would betray the Revolution? Was it pretty obvious once he disappeared on November 1 that he had gone over to the Soviet side?

KIRALY: Yes, but it was not obvious that he went there with evil intentions. I would rather believe that he was convinced, "Either you take this offer, because we need someone from the Imre Nagy government, or we send back Rákosi." I don't have any documentary evidence, but all indications are that he might have been threatened with the return of the Stalinists. And I believe that Kádár already had some sort of commitment that after law and order was restored he could continue a certain kind of reform, and that's what he did. But this only a personal impression; I can't prove it.

I consider Kádár a much more decent man than do most of those who live in Hungary today - they say that I overestimate him. It is true that Kádár gave his name to the tremendous butchery which took place after the Revolution. To give his name to the butchery and then to be the glorified saint of the country is quite a controversial situation, but I still believe that Kádár did not go over with evil intentions.

SWARTZ: Micunovic says that the Soviet leaders preferred Münnich.

KIRALY: Of course. Münnich was a typical Muscovite Bolshevik who in the Spanish Civil War was already a murderer, involved in the International Brigades and not very gentle. Münnich was unquestionably a Soviet agent from the beginning to the end. Kádár had never been in the Soviet Union before 1956; he was a homespun Communist, from the underground. He risked his life while Gerö and Münnich and the others were sitting around in the international house in Moscow where all the Comintern people were during the war.

SWARTZ: Do you believe that the faction in the Soviet Politburo which was reluctant to intervene in Hungary might have been able to hold the upper hand, if not permanently at least for a while longer, if the United States had taken a different stand?

KIRALY: The case is that the Politburo was absolutely convinced that the Americans would not interfere, and whatever

America could have done would have had very little influence on the Soviet decision. It was, rather, a decision based upon the circumstances within the Soviet orbit, in which the Polish issue played a tremendous role. Poland had almost gone out of control, though for the time being there was no danger that it would explode. But China pressed, the military pressed, the Stalinists pressed, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany pressed - in other words, the decision was posed by the Soviet camp's internal structure and problems. Anyway, Eisenhower assured the Soviets that the would not interfere.

SWARTZ: So that even if Eisenhower had acted otherwise, if he had said for example, "We consider this a highly serious development, and we cannot ... [interrupted]"

KIRALY: ... tolerate the invasion of Hungary?" Still, they would have known that it was just words. They were absolutely convinced that America did not want to start a war against the Soviet Union.

SWARTZ: If Imre Nagy had had a few more days to work with, do you think he could have consolidated things and presented the Soviet leaders with a Gomulka-style regime committed to reform?

KIRALY: Yes. What might have changed the situation would have been if the Suez crisis had not occurred. That is what diverted American attention. The American diplomats might have been more active, but at the UN it was said, "Well, in Budapest there is an armistice, but in Suez there is fighting. Let's concentrate on Suez."

SWARTZ: Did you have any contact with American officials in Budapest?

KIRALY: After the Soviet invasion I transferred my headquarters to the mountains of Buda, and on the way I stopped at the American Legation's suburban residence. I asked whether I could talk to an American officer, but only an old Hungarian gardener was there, and he said that not a single person was left. They were in the bunker of the Legation, he said. I wanted to ask whether there was any American policy toward what had happened in Hungary; even then I did not want to ask for intervention, but I would have liked to have had some information. That was the time when my communication with Imre Nagy was interrupted: he had gone to the Yugoslav Embassy, but I didn't know that then. I wanted to ask whether something could be done by the United Nations. That was the kind of thing I would have liked to have known, but it wasn't possible.

SWARTZ: Were people in Hungary generally aware of the Eisenhower administration's call for the liberation of Eastern Europe, and did that come into play at any point?

KIRALY: Even in prison we knew verbatim Dulles' speech that "if ever a satellite achieves its freedom by its own strength, we'd never let it be subjugated again." Now that was the Hungarian Revolution. The Hungarian Revolution was a prototype of the conditions of Dulles. The view somewhat survived among the Hungarian diaspora that the Hungarians expected the Americans to come in, but informed people did not expect that. On the contrary, we needed diplomatic help, we needed other help, but we did not need a Soviet-American battle on the Danube.

SWARTZ: Did Radio Free Europe, in your opinion, play an important role in sparking the Revolution?

KIRALY: I was summoned over the radio. "Béla Király," they said, "your role is to lead the Hungarians to victory." They called me a national hero, that sort of thing. They did not make the Revolution, but they created an atmosphere which was unfair because there was nothing behind it. It did not represent the American policy or American determination. I got a personal call to action, with my name and rank and everything. I was called to attention by Radio Free Europe. Radio Free Europe caused much chaos because they dubbed Imre Nagy just a "Communist." They never understood what a tremendous person he really was.

APPENDIX J:

INTERVIEW WITH FOY KOHLER

Tequesta, FL: January 25, 1986

SWARTZ: Ambassador, did the Eisenhower administration's public call for the liberation of Eastern Europe translate into specific policy decisions at the State Department to promote that goal?

KOHLER: I was on the Policy Planning Staff just before the Eisenhower administration took office, and I took over as Deputy Assistant Secretary for East European and Soviet Affairs only in 1958. So I was not really very involved with this question. However, I would say that all of us in the State Department were aware of the administration's goals in Eastern Europe, and we kept them in mind. But as far as routine day-to-day policy was concerned, they weren't much of a guide.

SWARTZ: Did the 1949 fiasco in Albania, in which British and American efforts to promote an anti-Communist uprising were crushed, dissuade State Department officials from encouraging dissent and resistance elsewhere in Eastern Europe?

KOHLER: First of all, the operation in Albania was run by the CIA, not the State Department. When I was with the Voice of America I opposed these sort of "spectacular" efforts. A lot of people were sending balloons from West Germany into Eastern Europe, for example, which I thought was counterproductive. Later, one of the people that I worked with at the Voice was Doug Blaufarb, who had been involved in the Albanian operation, and he said that the whole thing had been amateurishly and ineptly handled.

SWARTZ: In the early 1950s was the Voice of America competing with Radio Free Europe?

KOHLER: Radio Free Europe was in the process of being set up at the time, but initially I wasn't very enthusiastic about it. I was concerned about what the emigres from Eastern Europe would be saying on the air. However, I talked with Allen Dulles a great deal about this and eventually came around to a reluctant acquiescence in the idea.

SWARTZ: Did Allen Dulles see RFE only as a means of informing East Europeans of what was taking place, or did he seek to go beyond that and encourage resistance to the Communist regimes?

KOHLER: There was a lot of optimism in Washington in those days about the possibility of domestic uprisings in Eastern Europe. But once RFE had gotten off the ground, guidelines calling for restraint in what was said were gradually implemented.

People living under oppressive regimes psychologically become very dependent on outside sources of information, and try to read things into that information that maybe isn't there. I was in occupied Greece during the war, and I remember how we used to dwell on everything the BBC said. So there are real risks if you are not careful about what you broadcast.

SWARTZ: Do you think that Khrushchev's "Peaceful Coexistence" policy was just a ploy to put the West off guard?

KOHLER: It was without a doubt a ploy. Khrushchev was a true believer in the Communist system; he was no theoretician, but he firmly believed that Communism was the wave of the future and that it was his job to promote it. For him, peaceful pretensions were just ways by which the Soviet Union could make international gains.

SWARTZ: But the Soviet withdrawal from Austria would seem to be a tangible indication of good intentions on Khrushchev's part.

KOHLER: I think that Khrushchev decided that the occupation of Austria no longer promised any profit and had become an obstacle to achieving more important goals. Also, I think he wanted to be seen in the world as a great statesman, as someone very different from Stalin. So he could give up a base in Finland and withdraw Soviet claims against Turkey, and it didn't really cost him very much.

SWARTZ: Do you think that the overwhelming American nuclear superiority during the 1950s could have been used in some way to deter Soviet military activity in Eastern Europe?

KOHLER: The Soviets were nervous about our nuclear advantage, but I don't think they ever believed that we would use nuclear weapons because of anything related to Eastern Europe. However, the Cuban Missile Crisis showed that they were counting the numbers very closely and were constantly aware of their own weakness.

APPENDIX K:

INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE LISTER

Washington, DC: October 6, 1986

SWARTZ: Mr. Lister, by the time of the Hungarian Revolution, what was your background in American policy toward Eastern Europe?

LISTER: I was in the US Embassy in Warsaw from December 1946 to April 1949, then was in the US Embassy in Moscow from 1950 to late 1952, and was the Polish Desk officer at the State Department from late 1953 until September 1957.

SWARTZ: Did the Eisenhower Administration's public call for the liberation of Eastern Europe translate in any direct fashion into specific directives within the State Department to try to achieve that goal?

LISTER: I can't think of one single instance where it did. So far as I am aware, and I was in touch with a very large number of people involved in Eastern European work, nothing was done to try to achieve "Rollback" in any way, in the sense of trying to roll back Soviet control of Eastern Europe. We were trying to keep the Poles, Estonians, Hungarians, and so on informed about events, but I never saw or heard of any example of our trying to liberate any of those countries.

SWARTZ: Did we try to bring about conditions which would facilitate internal revolutions?

LISTER: If you were a typical Pole - and Poland is one of the most anti-Communist countries I've ever seen - and you listened regularly to the Voice of America or Radio Free Europe, then you would have been given daily food for thought and discussion at the table as to how your government was trying to lie to you and mislead you. And that presumably would in many cases feed the very deep and very natural Polish desire for independence. But I do not recall of a single instance in which the United States ever advocated armed rebellion.

SWARTZ: To your knowledge, did the US make any efforts in this period to try to lure Communist regimes away from Moscow, as a sort of alternate, second-best policy?

LISTER: I had good relations with the Polish Embassy - it was part of my job - and I wouldn't say our relations were close, but they were good. We helped the Polish government financially when they asked for our

assistance, and I would say that the government was reasonably conscious (and in my position I was keenly conscious) of the great extent to which the Polish people, including many members of the Polish Communist Party, resented the domination of the country by the Soviet Union.

SWARTZ: In 1956, was there any effort within the State Department to try to help certain of the protagonists in the struggle for power in Poland?

LISTER: I am not aware that we had a preference for any particular leader over another, although there was an improvement in our relations with Poland after Gomulka came to power.

SWARTZ: To what extent was American policy toward Eastern Europe in this period coordinated with other government departments?

LISTER: I was in touch with the CIA and the White House, but I don't think that the National Security Council had a very high profile at the time. The Defense Department never seemed to take much of an interest in Poland - or if they did, I never saw any evidence of it. The Agency, of course, was keenly interested.

SWARTZ: In what ways, if any, did the United States hope to deter the Kremlin from taking military action against Poland?

LISTER: We wanted to make clear to the Soviets, though without necessarily making any threats, that Soviet action in Poland would be disastrous for Soviet-American relations. However, they seem to have decided that they could get what they wanted in Poland without military action, that just the threat of military action would suffice.

But the interagency meetings that we held on the Polish issue dealt much more with day-to-day problems than with how to somehow prevent a Soviet invasion or create a revolution in Poland. For example, we would discuss how the government should react to a piece on Poland which had appeared in the Sunday Times two days before, or whether we should confirm or deny certain rumors at the next press conference, that sort of thing. I would have conversations several times a day with the fellow who ran the Polish section of the Voice of America, in order that we could coordinate what we were each saying.

SWARTZ: Were State Department officials aware of any rifts within the Soviet leadership, divisions which might

leave room for some form of American diplomatic leverage?

LISTER: I don't think so, no. I don't recall any of us thinking in those terms.

APPENDIX L:

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN R. MAPOTHER

Washington, DC: March 23, 1987

SWARTZ: Mr. Mapother, what was your position at the time of the Hungarian Revolution?

MAPOTHER: I was a CIA officer at the United States Embassy in Vienna. I had been posted there in 1953 and remained there until 1957, with a brief home leave in 1955 following the State Treaty. I belonged to a small staff within the CIA which was known in the clandestine service as "Reports Officers." We were in essence expected to pass judgment on what the Station was learning, whether it was worth knowing, and how to prepare it so Washington could best make use of it. I was not a case officer, but I dealt with what case officers learned.

SWARTZ: You were therefore working for Peer De Silva, whose memoirs, Sub Rosa: The CIA and the Uses of Intelligence, appeared a few years ago?

MAPOTHER: Correct.

SWARTZ: It has been said that the Hungarian Revolution took the US by surprise. Did the Vienna Station see it coming?

MAPOTHER: Peer's book says that he saw it coming. If so he was very good at keeping secrets, because he never told anybody. I didn't see it coming, and I didn't know anyone who did. It was evident to us after the signing of the Austrian State Treaty, and in particular after the Hungarian government began to remove the security barriers on the Austro-Hungarian border (I remember watching it going on), that a relaxation was taking place within Hungary, but even so, none of us expected a Revolution. There were groups of people coming out of Hungary to tour Vienna - and then going back! - so we knew that changes were underway there.

Much later, a very experienced American correspondent who had been working in Vienna for years told me that he traveled to Budapest in the summer of 1956 and saw all the turmoil there - he even attended one of the meetings of the Petöfi Circle - and then tried to sell the story of the events in Hungary to three different news organizations in New York, but none of them would publish it. They said that Americans weren't much

interested in Hungarian politics. By the time the Revolution broke out he was in California - his editors had withdrawn him from Vienna. Very few of the reporters who were then sent to Hungary and Austria when the Revolution finally broke out spoke any Hungarian or had any background in the area.

SWARTZ: Can the Administration's attention to the area be characterized any more favorably?

MAPOTHER: I was told, again a couple of years later, that the government was not uninformed about events in Hungary, but that we were relying on information gathered by one of our Allies, who always seemed to have excellent information on Eastern Europe.

SWARTZ: That sounds like the Gehlen organization.

MAPOTHER: Actually, I never had a very high opinion of the Gehlen organization. I'd rather not name the Ally who was involved.

SWARTZ: There have been accounts that Gehlen was very successful in the first few years after the war in pulling East European émigrés out of the refugee camps and sending them back over the Iron Curtain as intelligence agents.

MAPOTHER: In my judgment, I would have known about those activities if they had been going on - but I didn't. I think that the reported exploits of the Gehlen organization are another one of these fabulous tales that you get about intelligence that have little basis. Essentially, what Gehlen did was to deliver the massive files of Fremde Heere Ost, which the American military thought to be very important; he also made available a certain number of trained German intelligence executives, most of whom were old Prussian officers. They were delightful old guys, but not what you would call intelligence professionals. Gehlen's reputation has been vastly overblown.

SWARTZ: From the Vienna Station, what was your perspective in 1956 on what was taking place in Eastern Europe?

MAPOTHER: The Austrian Treaty was the single most important development. All over Eastern Europe there were people who saw the Austrian State Treaty as the beginning of a Soviet pullback from what was widely considered to be a politically overextended position.

SWARTZ: As far as you know, did Washington come to the same conclusion at the time, that Soviet forces were overextended?

MAPOTHER: I should stress that I really was not in a position to have known what the thinking was in the upper levels of the Eisenhower Administration, but for what it is worth I regarded John Foster Dulles as an unimaginative type who was smart enough to see that the policy of so-called "Rollback" was impractical, but who was so deeply involved in the Republican slogans of the early 1950s that he couldn't say so openly.

When the Austrian State Treaty came up, it astonished me that Dulles seemed so insensitive to it and deeply suspicious of what it meant. And he offended the Austrians: when their delegation took off for Moscow in, I believe, March 1955, he made a public statement in effect telling the Austrians not to take any wooden nickels, even though that was the last thing in the world that you had to tell to people like Foreign Minister Leopold Figl or Chancellor Julius Raab. When Dulles came to Vienna in May to sign the Treaty he wanted to play the whole thing down. The reason I mention all this is that it was my impression that Dulles felt that if the Austrian Treaty were to lead to some sort of revolt or uproar in Eastern Europe, which it did, then the Russians would reinvade Austria all over again and take perhaps even more territory than the first time.

In other words, Dulles didn't think we were gaining anything by signing the Treaty, since in his view, if my reading of it is right, the Soviets would not hesitate to invade Austria if their position in Eastern Europe were disturbed. Later, in 1957 or 1958, Dulles made a speech in which he said that he thought the Austrian State Treaty was a good thing, and I think that the reason he said that was because the Treaty had held up during the Hungarian Revolution - the Soviets hadn't invaded Austria after all.

SWARTZ: Based on the documents and memoirs which I have seen, it seems that part of the Eisenhower Administration's rationale for not taking any steps in support of the Hungarians in 1956 was a fear that the Soviet side would respond by rolling west, into Austria or God knows where.

MAPOTHER: I think you're right; it was my impression that Dulles and the others in Washington thought exactly that way, that the Soviets might start rolling west. I never thought it was a serious possibility, and the Austrians, who understood the ground a lot better than we did, didn't think so either. They behaved with a certain insouciance and bravery, which I envy, because we were too cautious throughout the whole crisis.

We had an Ambassador in Vienna, Llewellyn Thompson - one of the Foreign Service's old "Russian hands" - whom I think was personally frightened by the crisis and could see nothing but unfavorable repercussions. The wives at the Embassy got together at one point and wanted to donate blood for the freedom fighters in Hungary, but Thompson told them it was all right to donate blood so long as they didn't associate the name of the Embassy with it. A lot of us thought this was nonsense. Thompson was concerned above all with not antagonizing the Russians, and I think that part of the reason for that was that he didn't want to screw up his chances of being Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

SWARTZ: William Stearman told me that Thompson prohibited any Embassy personnel from going near the Hungarian border.

MAPOTHER: He tried that on the Vice President, you know. I was told it took Nixon a good hour to change Thompson's mind, which shows that Thompson must have had more backbone than I thought he had. But one of the conditions was that Nixon would have to travel in a manner which disguised his presence, so these people, who knew nothing about clandestine operations, put someone else in the Vice President's bed at the Residence - I guess so if someone looked in the window they'd think it was Nixon - and slipped Nixon out a side door around midnight. They went down in a cavalcade to the Burgenland, and everyone in Vienna knew it the next day. It was in the newspapers and everything. What a ridiculous performance.

SWARTZ: Is it true that there was no CIA Station in Hungary at the time?

MAPOTHER: I really can't answer that question, although it's my assumption that there were CIA officers in Budapest.

SWARTZ: But isn't it true that many American covert operations in Hungary were conducted out of Vienna?

MAPOTHER: By the time of the Hungarian Revolution there were very few such operations. In 1955, when the Austrian State Treaty was signed, the sort of free-swinging operations of the deep Cold War period were already by and large being cut back. I think the reason was that they just weren't achieving that much. We were required to cut back greatly, and it's my recollection that very few operations survived. Of course, we had someone who watched Hungary and kept track of what was going on there, and who was available whenever a

Hungarian walked in - which during the Revolution many did.

SWARTZ: In De Silva's book he writes at great length about how he gathered intelligence on what was happening in Hungary in 1956 and reported it to Washington, whereas I would have assumed that that would have been the responsibility of the Budapest Station, if one existed.

MAPOTHER: My recollection is that there were CIA people in Budapest at the time. I don't believe that it was not until after the Hungarian Revolution that intelligence officers were posted to Eastern Europe. In general, though, I would point out that people don't like to run clandestine operations in the host country. If you really want to be clandestine, you invest enough so that your knowledgeable top level in the operation are not in a position where the host police can walk in on them; in other words, you work from a third country.

SWARTZ: Were you familiar with a CIA program in 1956 to train East European émigrés near Munich and infiltrate them back over the Iron Curtain to carry out paramilitary or other operations?

MAPOTHER: I remember that in a later period there was a type of training school in the Munich area which dealt with East Europeans, among others, but I do not recall at any time cross-border operations into Eastern Europe designed to organize guerrilla resistance or to conspire against the governments of Eastern Europe. Some of the accounts of the CIA which were written twenty years ago tried to claim that the CIA set off the Hungarian Revolution, which of course is nonsense. The things that set off national revolutions are completely beyond the capabilities of an intelligence service.

SWARTZ: Jim Angleton claimed in 1976 that there was in fact a CIA program underway in 1956 to train East Europeans and then to send them back to their home countries, and furthermore that it was because these prospective agents were not yet prepared for their missions that Angleton and others on the Operations end of things wanted to delay releasing Khrushchev's speech. Does this sound credible to you?

MAPOTHER: I don't know of anything to support that. Angleton had his supporters as well as his detractors, of course, but he used to tell some pretty fabulous tales. I wouldn't regard him as a very reliable source.

SWARTZ: Did Frank Wisner come to Vienna during the course of the Revolution?

MAPOTHER: He came after the Revolution had broken out, but he had nothing to do with any of the operations underway in Hungary, at least as far as I was aware of. He was very concerned about problems of finished intelligence, such as whether people in Vienna, particularly Tommy Thompson, were getting what they needed in the way of information on the world in general. That had nothing to do with clandestine operations.

SWARTZ: In Thomas Powers' book, The Man Who Kept the Secrets, he claims that when Wisner was in Vienna he was trying to get operations going in support of the Hungarians.

MAPOTHER: Well, I sensed that in him, but that didn't make him unique. Everybody had that feeling. When you're in the field and the chief comes by, no good diplomat or intelligence officer who knows his ground is going to say, "Okay, boss, we'll do what you want." Normally, when someone from Washington comes, you know that you're dealing with a man of power who probably has a number of primitive concepts. And if you know your own area well, and are realistic about what is needed, you usually end up telling him that you just can't do certain things. I don't know whether Wisner made any specific proposals (he wouldn't have made them to me in any case), but I doubt that he did.

Frankly, I don't think that he was in a position to evaluate what was going on then. For one thing, there was a widely held belief in Washington at that time, floated by the newspapers, that Mongolian troops had been sent into Hungary and that a number of these Mongols had defected and were now in Vienna. I had to deal with quite a few Americans who thought this was true, and Wisner was one of them.

SWARTZ: But isn't it true that there were Soviet soldiers in Hungary who defected, and others who turned their guns over to Hungarians?

MAPOTHER: It is certainly true that the Soviet forces stationed in Hungary prior to the Revolution did not want to get involved in it, and wanted, in essence, to minimize the potential for friction with the Hungarians. I can recall at least two cases in Western Hungary in which Soviet garrisons, one near Sopron and the other near Győr, I believe, pulled their forces out of the city they were stationed in and actually camped out in the woods - all in an effort to avoid conflict with the Hungarians. In one case that I knew of, the Russians

sent Hungarian speakers to negotiate with the Hungarian Revolutionary leaders in the city that was adjacent to their camp in the woods, to try to arrange for food; they didn't want to have to forage, and thereby risk greater conflict with the Hungarians.

SWARTZ: Were you ever involved in an operation called Red Sox/Red Cap?

MAPOTHER: I've heard the term, but I don't recall too much about it, or which was the "Sox" part and which the "Cap" part. I think one side of it was to try to recruit people from the Soviet and East European countries who were traveling abroad, and the other side was to try to penetrate Eastern Europe.

SWARTZ: Were you involved in any of the balloon/leaflet operations which were conducted before the Revolution?

MAPOTHER: I eventually became aware of them, but only because of stories that appeared in the press. At one point, if I recall correctly, the Czechs claimed that one of their internal airline flights crashed after one of these balloons allegedly had got caught up in its engine. During the Hungarian Revolution, I remember talking with a Hungarian who had made it to Austria and was going back over the border, and he said to me, "Why don't you quit floating these leaflets over? We really don't need them. But if you could find a way to float over some anti-tank weapons, that would be pretty useful."

The whole thing was embarrassing. We'd all been involved in the Rollback rhetoric of the 1952 Presidential campaign to a certain extent, but the fact is that the government of the United States did not at any point have a policy of liberating Eastern Europe by military force or even by clandestine action. I hate to say it, but I think this was just public entertainment in the United States. And that's even more grotesque, because if we had faced the question of how Rollback was to be accomplished, and coped with the decisions which that required, then we would have emerged with a sober view of the limitations of what could be done. Unfortunately, despite all the partisan bickering back and forth, we never coped with this reality.

I can remember a New York Times story in 1952, where a Democratic critique of the Republicans' rhetoric had reached a point where Dulles had to make a statement explaining that it was possible to bring about changes in foreign governments by clandestine operations. But the fact is that what he was talking about has

probably never been achieved except in wartime, when it's a risk you can take because of the potential military rewards.

SWARTZ: Yet the CIA played a role in this period in bringing about the overthrow of regimes in Iran and Guatemala.

MAPOTHER: The CIA could never have done any of that in a country which had a Soviet military presence, which is what existed in Eastern Europe at that time. The hard facts of Eastern Europe were very different from the situation in Iran or Guatemala.

SWARTZ: It seems that Arbenz was stampeded into panicking and giving up power, whereas most of the East European leaders were more sophisticated than that.

MAPOTHER: That's right, although it seemed to me that during the early stages of the Revolution the Soviets were undecided about what to do. They even issued a public statement that seemed to indicate that they would consider withdrawing from Hungary, and even though I was almost sure they never really would, I thought that we should make at least make a countermove to try to bring about such a withdrawal.

So I made a proposal inspired by an informal Embassy working group on Hungary (which included Foreign Service Officers, USIA people, and so on) that we recommend to Washington that the US offer to withdraw direct American deployments in Italy in exchange for Soviet withdrawal from Hungary. I thought that we should pass the message to the Soviets through Belgrade, where I felt it might receive credibility and demonstrate our desire for a diplomatic settlement. That wouldn't have taken Italy out of NATO, only removed the purely American bases. The Army people at the Embassy had not been very happy about the Austrian State Treaty, since they had had to dismantle their base in Salzburg and, to compensate, had expanded their troop presence in Italy. I was told that my suggestion was included in a cable, but no one in Washington ever seemed to have heard of it.

SWARTZ: The President, and Secretary Dulles before him, made a speech announcing that the US did not see Hungary as a "potential military ally," which was designed, I believe, to try to reassure Khrushchev regarding American intentions.

MAPOTHER: I had nothing to do with that, of course, but I think that speech made a lot of sense - except that it stopped far short of giving Khrushchev's people something to show for giving up Hungary.

SWARTZ: But couldn't Eisenhower's pledge of American non-involvement in Hungary actually have encouraged the Soviet leaders to intervene, by reducing the risks of a confrontation with the US attendant to such an invasion?

MAPOTHER: No, because the Soviets may have taken the speech to mean that we were thinking of making Hungary a military ally. By the way they think, the President's statement might have been taken as an indication that we in fact were planning just the opposite of what we were saying. That's the way the Soviets are. They are profoundly suspicious, and in dealing with them it's better to have an object which is concrete to offer. It seemed to me that the lack of direct American deployments in Italy was not a great loss to us, but that it might seem to the Soviets as if it was. I know that Thompson didn't think it was a half bad idea, but he wouldn't have sent the cable himself.

SWARTZ: Béla Király told me that at the time he felt the Red Army would never evacuate Hungary, because they needed it to keep Northern Italy in check.

MAPOTHER: We had plenty of forces in Italy, but the Soviets must have known that they weren't making much of a threat to Hungary. They also knew full well that NATO was only a defensive alliance and was not threatening Eastern Europe. The Soviets portray NATO as an offensive threat for propaganda purposes at home and in the satellites. At the top level, the Soviets are pretty realistic, though; they know that their charges of NATO aggression are a lot of nonsense.

SWARTZ: In De Silva's book he says that after the Revolution broke out the United States had several days warning that a Soviet invasion of Hungary was imminent, due largely to contacts in the Hungarian railroads, who told of huge Soviet rolling stock requests - which were to bring in fresh troops and equipment.

MAPOTHER: That's completely true. We knew that Soviet military preparations were underway. I remember having an argument at the time with a very able Foreign Service Officer who was convinced that the Hungarian Revolution proved that John Foster Dulles had been right about Rollback, and I pointed out that the Soviets were in the middle of bringing trainloads of new troops across the border at Záhony. I can remember telling this fellow that the Soviets were going to crush the Revolution, and that was definitely several days before November 4.

SWARTZ: Were there any other indications that a second Soviet intervention was about to take place?

MAPOTHER: We were able to speak with quite a number of Hungarian fighters about what they had seen. The fact is that Hungarians were just walking into Austria, some of them carrying their weapons all the way to Vienna without being picked up by the police, and walking into the Embassy. We learned a number of things from them, including some information which never got into the press, because many of them came from parts of Hungary so remote that they were not even broadcasting. In part from such people, we were able to conclude quite early on that Soviet reinforcements were entering the country. Later on, we were able to get much more specific indications that the Soviets were going to crush the Revolution.

SWARTZ: Do you recall exactly when that was?

MAPOTHER: Yes, it was November 2. On that date, the Soviet forces that had gone into a sort of bivouac in the woods in Western Hungary came out in battle formation and began taking over the highways. Eventually, after Budapest had been subdued, they reached right up to the Austrian border, but then they behaved with extreme caution, in order not to frighten people into thinking that they might go further west.

SWARTZ: Which is ironic, since a number of American officials seem to have had precisely that fear.

MAPOTHER: That reminds me of an experience I had at the time. On November 3, I was duty officer in the Embassy and I had a call from a lady from Denver, a school teacher who was leading a class of ten or twelve young girls on a tour around Europe, and she wanted an assurance from me that the Soviet Union was not going to move into Vienna. She said that her group would be there for only a couple more days, and they didn't want their trip ruined. I said that it was our judgment that the Soviets were not going to move into Austria, but that didn't satisfy her. She wanted a guarantee.

SWARTZ: In the aftermath of the Revolution, was there any change or cutback in the CIA's activities in Vienna, as if a chance had been passed which would not return?

MAPOTHER: Well, as I said, the big cutback in operations involving Eastern Europe came after the State Treaty of 1955. After the Hungarian Revolution, the operational possibilities were gradually severely reduced. The border obstacles were rebuilt and security was tightened up.

APPENDIX M:

INTERVIEW WITH ENDRE MARTON

Washington, DC: October 31, 1985

SWARTZ: Professor, what was your first encounter with the Soviets?

MARTON: Toward the end of World War II the Red Army tried to deport me to the Soviet Union. Throughout the war I had been somewhat skeptical of BBC and other reports that the Red Army was capturing upwards of 100,000 Germans at a time. But when the Russians came to Budapest I saw how they did it - they just rounded up everyone they could find between the ages of 18 and 45. They would go house to house and summon the men to help with small work projects, just a "malenkii robot." I was taken away along with the concierge of the building, a poor worker. I managed to escape, but he did not return for eight years.

SWARTZ: Following the death of Stalin, did the various members of the Soviet Presidium have any favorites among the Hungarian leaders?

MARTON: Kádár eventually became Khrushchev's pet. I will never forget that in 1960 Khrushchev came to the United Nations in a Soviet ship and brought along with him all the top Party leaders of Eastern Europe - Kádár, Zhivkov, Gomulka, Gheorghiu-Dej, Novotny, and even Mehmet Shehu. It was quite obvious then that although Khrushchev had respect for Gomulka (and ignored most of the others), his real pet was Kádár. He was sort of a protector of Kádár; after all, he made Kádár what he is today.

SWARTZ: And yet, at the time of the Revolution, Khrushchev preferred Münnich.

MARTON: Münnich was the driving force behind the whole "kidnapping" of Kádár; it was he who persuaded Kádár to go over to the other side. I am convinced that Kádár otherwise would not have gone over - he would have stuck with Nagy, and would probably have been executed. It was Münnich who lured him over, and Kádár went with Münnich to the Soviet embassy on November 1. Their driver and their Hungarian car were sent away, and nobody saw the two men again until their return with the Soviet forces.

SWARTZ: Do you know by what means Kádár and Münnich reached the Soviet Union from Budapest?

MARTON: Kádár's first radio speech was made the next day, November 2, from Uzhgorod. It is not clear whether Kádár and Münnich were first flown to Moscow, but I doubt it. Then they came to Szolnok with the Russian troops, where they made their next radio broadcast. The most ironic part of this tale is that it was Kádár who in the early hours of November 1 told Andropov (during one of his many visits to the Parliament building) in a fit of outrage that he would go down into the streets and fight the Soviet tanks with his bare hands. Then he defected the same afternoon.

SWARTZ: As far as you know, who was it who made the initial request on October 24 for the Soviet troops to suppress the demonstrations in the streets?

MARTON: It was Gerő and Hegedüs.

SWARTZ: Brzezinski writes that Marosán was responsible, appealing "on the Politburo's behalf."

MARTON: Marosán was much too unimportant a figure to carry out such a task. Besides, he was a Social Democrat and was never persona grata with the Soviets. He was used by the Hungarian Communists as a puppet, representing the former Socialists. There was no longer a Social Democratic Party, as they had been forced to merge with the Communists early on. Marosán was a nobody.

SWARTZ: There has also been some speculation that the Soviets never received a formal request at all, even from Gerő - as, for example, in Afghanistan.

MARTON: I would be surprised if there had not in fact been a request. The Soviets would have come in anyway, but their relationship with Gerő was such that there was no doubt that in such a situation he would call on them. The request was not really "formal" either: Gerő probably just picked up the telephone and said he needed help.

SWARTZ: And Gerő's failure to handle the situation himself was the reason that he was dropped?

MARTON: The Soviets were trying to find a peaceful solution to the crisis. Khrushchev was against forceful interference in Hungary, but he was voted down in the Politburo. Of this I have no doubt. It was Zhukov's insistence on intervention which was accepted. I'm not sure whether Khrushchev was alone in resisting this view or whether there were others with him in that minority.

SWARTZ: How might you account for the fact that during rising tension in Hungary, the Party First Secretary - Gerő -

spent the better part of a month out of the country, first in the Soviet Union and then in Yugoslavia? Didn't he have any idea what was happening at home?

MARTON: Nobody, whether Communist or non-Communist, could have expected a revolution. Two weeks before the Revolution, my wife, who was with UPI, got a passport (for the first time), and she went to London. There was a big dinner given for her there by UPI, and they asked her whether she thought that there would be a revolution in Hungary. She jokingly answered that she didn't think so at all, unless perhaps the Hungarian soccer team were to lose another World Cup final. But the next morning there was a knock on her hotel door, and someone said that she'd better get back to Hungary, because a revolution had broken out.

The point is that I can't really blame Gerö for leaving the country at the time. Moreover, the Communists were supremely confident that their rule was secure. An AVO man, who was good to me when I was in prison, came to our house during the Revolution in fear of the mobs. I asked him then why it was that the AVO had never supplied its men with false identification cards, and he replied, "Because we never imagined that it would be necessary." The AVO completely disintegrated, as did the Hungarian army. They collapsed in two days, despite ten years of indoctrination. Nobody could believe it, and nobody had seen it coming.

SWARTZ: In your book, The Forbidden Sky, you write that the Czechs were given the responsibility of trying to reorganize the AVO, and that AVO men in Hungary were ordered to make their way to Czechoslovakia. Can you elaborate on this?

MARTON: There was a corridor of about sixty kilometers kept open from Budapest to the Slovak border. The Soviets tried desperately to keep this corridor open, and they succeeded in smuggling out a number of top AVO (and Party) people.

SWARTZ: Ernst Nagy, in a monograph for the National Defense University, claims that Gerö and Hegedüs traveled to Czechoslovakia (in a tank, no less) before going on to Moscow. Do you know anything about that?

MARTON: I never heard anything like that, although I suppose it might be true. Keep in mind that the military airport serving Budapest was in Russian hands throughout the Revolution, so they might just as easily have been flown out. There wouldn't seem to be much need for using tanks for such purposes.

SWARTZ: Were there any Czechs who played an active role in supporting the Revolution in Hungary?

MARTON: No, the only ones who gave us any support were the Poles. Medical supplies, blood, and food were flown in for us from Poland.

SWARTZ: From where were the Soviet reinforcements brought in?

MARTON: The wife of the American military attache was asked to take down the numbers of the Soviet tanks which crossed the square in front of the Legation, and it was almost immediately clear that these tanks had come from the Soviet Union itself. A great many of the soldiers who came in were Asiatics, suggesting that the Soviets may not have trusted the 80,000 or more troops which had been stationed in Hungary already.

SWARTZ: Was it true that many of the Soviet troops that had been stationed in Hungary had learned Hungarian?

MARTON: Soviet soldiers were kept completely isolated from the Hungarian population. Fraternization was prohibited, and Soviet discipline was very strict. One hardly ever could see Soviet soldiers out on the streets, even in the towns near their garrisons; they were kept completely isolated.

SWARTZ: As far as you know, did the Soviet troops that had been stationed in Hungary before the Revolution refuse to fight?

MARTON: My suspicion is not that they refused to fight but that they were never ordered to fight. That is not to say that there was no shooting - they did shoot back when fired upon. But they were uneasy because they didn't know what their orders were. In fact there were no orders.

Andropov came to Parliament at least twice a day; I bumped into him several times there. He came to lie, to say that everything was all right, that we should negotiate with them, and that the Soviet troops would be withdrawing (at least from Budapest). He was particularly adamant that the military should negotiate separately.

But I think that the Soviet maneuverings in Hungary between October 23 and November 1 - when the Politburo in Moscow finally decided to act - were more an attempt to quiet things down than a deliberate trap.

SWARTZ: Yet Pal Maléter walked straight into a trap.

MARTON: Once the decision was finally made in Moscow to intervene, KGB Chief Serov immediately was sent to Hungary. He was the one who arrested Maléter and the others in Csepel, where they had been invited to continue the military talks. The talks had begun on the morning of October 31, in the Parliament building, and the session was excellent: details were discussed as specific as the pomp and ceremony to accompany the Soviet withdrawal. After four hours the Soviet side suggested that the talks be continued in the evening at the Soviet military headquarters, in Tököl, on Csepel Island. So the talks continued there.

According to Ferenc Erdei, who was a government Minister and a civilian member of the Hungarian military delegation, the talks were carried on in Tököl in a very peaceful fashion, with the Soviets continuing to dwell on the details of evacuation. Suddenly the door opened, and a man in uniform but without insignia - later identified as Serov - entered the room. He whispered something to Malinin, the head of the Soviet delegation, who then shrugged and left the room. At that point Serov's people came in and announced that everyone in the room was under arrest. Erdei was arrested along with Maléter and the others, but for some reason was released and allowed to return to Budapest.

SWARTZ: Do you think that Malinin and his delegation knew that this was going to happen?

MARTON: No, I am pretty sure that they did not. Again according to Erdei, the Soviet delegation seemed completely and genuinely surprised. Malinin even bowed to Maléter on his way out.

SWARTZ: Do you think that Andropov was in fact working for the KGB already? There has been speculation that Andropov's cables may have gone straight to Serov and not through the usual channels.

MARTON: It's very hard to know. It seems plausible to me that Andropov might have had some special arrangement with Serov, although I cannot prove it.

SWARTZ: How would you account for Tito's support of the Soviet intervention?

MARTON: I would say that initially, at the outbreak of the Revolution, Tito was not unhappy. It was obvious right from the beginning that many, if not most, of the Revolution's leaders had in mind a system of government something like that of Yugoslavia. Clearly Tito did not dislike that fact. But Tito was a realist, and when Khrushchev came to him at Brioni, as Micunovic

describes, Tito chose not to object to the Soviet plan. Later, after the Soviets broke the "gentlemen's agreement" and abducted Nagy upon his release from the Yugoslav embassy, Tito was enraged.

SWARTZ: Do you think that there might have been some deal between Tito and Khrushchev, though, either at Brioni or afterwards, in which Yugoslavia would profess anger at the abduction of Nagy but in reality have been informed ahead of time of Soviet intentions?

MARTON: No. I knew Soldatic, the Yugoslav ambassador to Hungary, before the Revolution, and I can attest that he was a very decent man. He sympathized with the Revolution and he was outraged by the arrest of Nagy.

SWARTZ: When Soldatic invited Nagy to take refuge in the embassy, did he (Soldatic) know that Khrushchev and Malenkov had visited Tito in Brioni?

MARTON: I must assume he knew.

SWARTZ: Did he tell Nagy about that visit?

MARTON: I don't know.

SWARTZ: I ask because it seems to me that the information might have made a big difference to Nagy; perhaps if Nagy had known that Khrushchev and Tito had come to some agreement he wouldn't have been so willing to put himself in Yugoslav hands.

MARTON: It's hard to say. Those were strange, emotional times. On November 1, for example, my wife and I got a phone call at the Duna Hotel from the Polish ambassador (whom we didn't even know), who said that if there was trouble in Budapest, and if we had nowhere else to go, we should go to the Polish embassy. So those were strange times.

I don't know, however, exactly how Nagy's asylum in the Yugoslav embassy was arranged. Soldatic was never willing to talk about it. But he certainly must have gotten permission from Belgrade before he could have invited Nagy in.

SWARTZ: Were you able to speak with Nagy while he was in the Yugoslav embassy?

MARTON: While Nagy and the others were being held there, I and some other reporters managed to enter the embassy, which was not easy, since it was surrounded by Soviet tanks. We were allowed to meet only with the Yugoslav diplomats, who told us (as any embassy staff would do in

similar circumstances) that Nagy and his supporters could not use the embassy as a propaganda platform.

So neither I nor anyone else was able to see Nagy while he was inside the Yugoslav mission. On one occasion Nagy managed to smuggle out a note to me (through the fiancée of one of the less prominent men held), in which he vehemently denied rumors that he was considering making a deal with Kádár and accepting a position in the new government. He specifically instructed me to tell the world that there was no such deal and that there would be no such deal.

SWARTZ: Did Kádár seriously expect that Nagy could join his government, imposed as it was solely by Soviet might?

MARTON: For weeks Kádár met in Parliament with representatives of the Workers' Councils (which were still intact, even after the fighting in Budapest had ended), and repeatedly offered to share power with Nagy.

SWARTZ: When Kádár finally made his arrangements with Yugoslavia for the release of Nagy, do you think that he knew what was going to happen?

MARTON: No, I am convinced that he did not. Kádár would never have arrested or executed Nagy.

SWARTZ: How might you account for the fact that Romanian Party leader Gheorghiu-Dej was in Yugoslavia just as the Revolution in Hungary broke out? Was his trip concerned only with economic issues, as was claimed at the time?

MARTON: I don't think so. The Soviet-Yugoslav rapprochement made Tito extremely important at the time, and everyone wanted to consult with him. After the kidnapping of Nagy, of course, things soured for Tito again.

SWARTZ: Do you think that Dej and Gerő might have met during their coincident visits to Yugoslavia?

MARTON: I doubt it. Relations between Hungary and Romania were, and are, very bad.

SWARTZ: Do you think that the Pravda Declaration of October 30, which Mikoyan and Suslov brought with them on their second trip to Budapest, was genuine in its acceptance of the Revolution, or was it simply a deception?

MARTON: I believe it reflected Khrushchev's genuine desire for a peaceful solution to the Hungarian crisis and to Soviet-East European relations in general.

SWARTZ: Whereas Molotov opposed Khrushchev?

MARTON: Molotov wanted a tougher line, and more importantly, so did Zhukov. Malenkov, on the other hand, liked Imre Nagy very much, stemming from ties formed in Moscow in earlier times, before World War II.

Gerő, having been active in the Comintern, was probably closest to Molotov, if he was close to anyone. Gerő was a cold apparatchik who had been a PolitCommissar in the Spanish Civil War, with all that that entailed. He was respected in Moscow as a great manipulator and operator - the perfect Number Two man.

Rajk served in Spain as well, but with a difference: he was not sent by the Russians, whereas Gerő was. That meant that Gerő and his supporters in Hungary had Moscow's backing and were untouchable. Rajk and his people, however, were labeled "Western Communists" and were mistrusted from the start by Moscow; these were the ones who were executed or ousted in 1949.

Gerő and Rákosi were Soviet citizens, whereas Rajk had never even been to Russia.

SWARTZ: After the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform, how closely was Gerő involved in the campaign against Tito?

MARTON: The Hungarians were in the forefront in denouncing Tito. For months you couldn't see anything on the front pages of the Hungarian newspapers but tirades against Tito, "The chained dog of Western imperialism." Rákosi, Gerő, Farkas, and Révai were the leaders of the anti-Yugoslav campaign in Hungary.

SWARTZ: Did they also smuggle Hungarian agents into Yugoslavia?

MARTON: Of course. It was easy enough to get agents in, but they never proved very effective.

SWARTZ: During 1956, but before the Revolution, did Tito send any special emissaries to meet with Imre Nagy and his supporters?

MARTON: Certainly not openly, and certainly not people who could be publicly recognized, but I have no doubt that there were Yugoslav agents in contact with the Nagy group. So much that the reformers did - the Workers' Councils which sprang up everywhere, for example - was patterned after the Yugoslav model, that there must have been some guidance.

SWARTZ: In your opinion, was the model that Hungarians most wished to emulate that of Austria or of Yugoslavia, if either?

MARTON: That depends on which Hungarians you mean. The leaders of the Revolution, who were of course Communists, naturally preferred the Yugoslav example. But the people as a whole longed for a solution along Austrian lines.

SWARTZ: Had ten years of Communist indoctrination to any extent developed pro-Soviet feeling among Hungarian youth?

MARTON: Ironically, the single most important thing our kids seemed to have learned in the Communist youth movement was how to make a Molotov cocktail and use it against a tank. I will never forget how I saw a twelve-year old girl and two little boys destroy a Soviet tank with three Molotov cocktails.

The saddest part of the Revolution came later, when thousands of Hungarians were deported to the Soviet Union. Surprisingly, at one point Kadar's press secretary, István Szirmai, broke down and confessed to group of us Western correspondents in the Parliament building that it was true that there had been deportations. We filed the story before he could retract it, although the next day there was an official denial that Szirmai had ever said what he said.

SWARTZ: Do you think that the West could have done more to have assisted the Hungarians?

MARTON: Suez was a stab in the back for us. The attention of the West was divided, with the Suez crisis seen in the West as much more important than an uprising in some faraway country which was Communist anyway.

None of us expected or desired United States military intervention, but I think that Western diplomatic efforts would have been appropriate. Perhaps if the major Western ambassadors in Moscow together had presented a warning to the Soviet leadership, it might have raised doubts in the Russians' minds about the wisdom of proceeding with an invasion.

SWARTZ: Did you ever come across any evidence of American or other Western intelligence activity in support of the Revolution?

MARTON: There might have been clandestine infiltrations of various Hungarian organizations, but if so we were naturally never aware of it. On the other hand, since I was out on the streets nearly 24 hours a day, I would certainly have known if any Western weapons or supplies had been funneled to the freedom fighters. I can attest that there were no such weapons or supplies.

SWARTZ: Weren't convoys of trucks with food and medicine sent from Austria?

MARTON: Yes, there were a few convoys, but no weapons were ever hidden in the trucks. That was not too important, however, because once the Hungarian army had disintegrated, army units either fought on the side of the Revolution or opened their arsenals to the freedom fighters. The huge arsenal on Csepel Island, for example, was distributed to the fighters in Budapest during the first hours of the Revolution.

The point I should stress is that what disappointed us most about the United States response was not that there were no efforts to assist us militarily, but that there was no American diplomatic pressure against Moscow. The Presidential elections were to be held the next week, and Dulles was in the hospital. On November 4 there was a State Department briefing at Walter Reed, and even though Hungary was six hours ahead of Washington, there was no mention of the massive Soviet repression that had been going on all day. Neither were there any questions by reporters on the topic.

SWARTZ: Perhaps the US Legation in Budapest had been unable to get through to State.

MARTON: That brings up another tragic element of this whole affair. Chris Ravndal, a great man and a friend of mine, who had spent a lot of time in Hungary and who had learned Hungarian, was recalled in July 1956 from his post as Minister, and no replacement was sent. He was recalled despite the fact that Hungary was already in obvious social, intellectual, and political ferment.

For the crucial next few months the Legation was left in the hands of a scholarly and timid man who was not the right person to head a diplomatic mission during troubled times. On October 23, as demonstrations raged through Budapest, a white flag was hung from his house, put out by the butler (quite timid himself) while no one else was at home. Anton Nyerges, the press attache in the US Legation, heard about the flag and dashed over to the house in his jeep, where he tore the flag down. But the incident did not say much for American resolve.

Eventually Edward T. Wailes was sent over as the new Minister, but he would not present his credentials to Kádár and was therefore unable to act at any official functions. In February 1957 the Hungarian government finally asked him to get accredited or to leave - and he left. But why did the United States act in this way toward Hungary, and not toward the aggressor, the Soviet Union?

APPENDIX N:

INTERVIEW WITH JANOS RADVANYI

Starkeville, MS: January 18, 1986

SWARTZ: Professor, how did you come to know the Chinese Ambassador to Hungary, Ho Te-ching, whom you describe in your book, Hungary and the Superpowers?

RADVANYI: I met him in 1957 while an official of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, and over the course of several conversations he described to me the role of his embassy during the 1956 Revolution.

SWARTZ: Do you know if Ho was a member of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, as Andropov, the Soviet Ambassador, was in the CPSU?

RADVANYI: I am not sure, although I do know that Ho was an old hand in Chinese foreign policy and was personally close to Foreign Minister Ch'en Yi.

SWARTZ: What was your role in the delegation that accompanied Prime Minister Münnich to the PRC in 1959?

RADVANYI: At the time of that trip I was the head of the Far Eastern Division in the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, in charge of the sections that dealt with China, North Korea, North Vietnam, and Mongolia.

SWARTZ: Based on the delegation's meeting with Mao Tse-tung, what did you gather was Mao's view of the Hundred Flowers movement?

RADVANYI: From everything that we heard it seemed to us that the campaign's call for openness was a deception put forward by Mao and others in the Chinese leadership in order to separate their friends from their enemies. Some people believe that the Hundred Flowers movement was a genuine effort by Mao to relax control, perhaps in line with Khrushchev's calls for change, but I think that the objective was to isolate and destroy specific opponents.

SWARTZ: Why do you think that Mikoyan and Suslov were chosen as the Soviet emissaries to Hungary during the Revolution?

RADVANYI: Suslov had been involved in Soviet foreign policy for a long time. I remember that he had been in Hungary many times - he knew Hungary well, and used to enjoy quoting Hungarian poets. Mikoyan was picked probably

because Khrushchev always considered him the best troubleshooter. He sent Mikoyan to Hungary in July, for example, when Rákosi had to be removed, although Rákosi wouldn't accept Mikoyan's orders and insisted on phoning Khrushchev himself.

SWARTZ: Was it that common for Rákosi just to pick up the phone and call Khrushchev?

RADVANYI: Yes. All the satellite leaders had special lines to Khrushchev's office. The hook-up was called the "Chaika," which means "sea gull." The term was first used during World War II by the Red Army, which used special lines to communicate from the front back to headquarters.

SWARTZ: When Mikoyan and Suslov came to Budapest in October why did they give up on Gerő?

RADVANYI: They hoped that Nagy, working with Kádár, could save the situation for them, something perhaps like what Gomulka was doing in Poland. Military intervention could not have appeared as a very attractive option to the leadership in Moscow, particularly since Khrushchev's position was not completely secure. The possibility of a political solution was seen as far preferable.

SWARTZ: Do you believe that the October 30 Declaration in Pravda, which Mikoyan and Suslov brought with them on their second trip to Budapest, was genuine in its acceptance of the Revolution, or was it simply a deception?

RADVANYI: At the time the Declaration appeared to be genuine, and it is my understanding that at that point the Soviet Politburo was still trying to find a peaceful resolution to the crisis. However, I cannot be sure what was really going on in Moscow. According to Khrushchev's memoirs (which I examined myself, in the original Russian, at Columbia University) even after Liu Shao-chi arrived from Peking calling for intervention in Hungary, Khrushchev still was undecided about how to proceed, and I believe that to be true.

SWARTZ: During your meeting with Mao Tse-tung in 1959, did Mao refer at any point in his comments on the Hungarian Revolution to the role which Liu was claimed by Khrushchev to have played?

RADVANYI: No, he didn't mention Liu at all. During the Cultural Revolution Liu was labeled a revisionist and was

eventually beaten to death, but in 1956, of course, everything Liu said in Moscow was cleared with Mao.

Khrushchev delayed authorizing the use of force in Hungary for as long as he could. I very strongly doubt that Mikoyan or Suslov had an important role in making that decision.

SWARTZ: But on the other hand, you believe that Ho Te-ching's reports from Budapest played a crucial role in the decisions made in Peking?

RADVANYI: That's right. At least that is the conclusion I would draw from my conversations in 1957 with Ho. But I should add that when we visited China, Ho was received very warmly by Mao, and Mao spoke glowingly about Ho's reporting during the crisis in Hungary. I think that Ho had known Mao for quite a long time, beginning perhaps during the Long March.

Still, the Chinese may not initially have been as eager for Soviet intervention as they claimed in later years that they had been. According to the press attache of the PRC embassy in Budapest, the mission supported Imre Nagy for some time, seeing in him a Communist opposition to Soviet "great power chauvinism."

SWARTZ: At what point, according to this account, did the Chinese embassy change its position and call for Russian intervention?

RADVANYI: The turning point was the Imre Mezö affair. By October 30, things were looking good: the Pravda Declaration was encouraging, and Soviet troops were withdrawing from Budapest. Inside the city all sorts of people were making their presence felt - there were reformers, democrats, socialists, and others of decent intentions, but there were also adventurers, hot-headed radicals, a few unreconciled fascists, and even criminals inadvertently freed from prison.

One group of revolutionaries, which included many of these troublemakers, surrounded the city Party headquarters, near the railroad station in Pest. A rumor had spread that there were prisoners held in dungeons under the building, and the mob was soon demanding that those prisoners be released.

Imre Mezö, the secretary of the city Party organization but a supporter of the Revolution, came out to the door and said that there were no prisoners being held under the building or anywhere else in the area and that if representatives of the group wished

to come in and check for themselves they were welcome to do so. But as he was speaking someone within the crowd opened fire, and Mezö was killed.

The mob then killed all the AVO guards, even though many of them were young recent recruits. This was followed by lynchings in the streets of anyone who was suspected of being AVO. It was a real tragedy, because the AVO people who were most guilty had fled early on, many of them to Czechoslovakia.

SWARTZ: There seems to have been a number of cases of atrocities against suspected AVO men.

RADVANYI: Yes, but the AVO headquarters itself was not taken. It was abandoned by the AVO at the outset, with a sign left up which said "This building is mined." In fact it wasn't, but no one would take the chance and be the first to enter.

Imre Nagy was determined to end all atrocities, but he was going to need a few days to do so. However the conclusion reached in the Chinese embassy was that the Nagy government was powerless to prevent mob rule, and it was only after this Mezö affair that the Chinese in Budapest turned against Nagy. It was the same with Kádár - he too decided to turn his back on the Revolution only because he was convinced that there was anarchy in the streets.

SWARTZ: Was Münnich, who defected to the Soviets along with Kádár, at any point ever genuinely committed to Nagy?

RADVANYI: I think so. I knew Münnich very well, and I can vouch that he, like Kádár, was 100 percent anti-Stalinist and anti-Rákosi. He had served in the brigades in Spain and had lived in Moscow, it is true, but he absolutely hated Stalin and had been lucky just to survive. In Spain, Münnich was the military commander of the Hungarian brigade, but I don't think he was a PolitCommissar. Münnich was a decent man, to a certain extent anyway.

SWARTZ: How did Münnich's role in Spain differ from Gerö's?

RADVANYI: Unlike Münnich, Gerö was an official of the Comintern, as was Andor Berei, the real power in the Foreign Ministry during the Rákosi years. Berei was Rákosi's right-hand man in the Foreign Ministry, reported to people in the CPSU International Department, and was reputed to be on very friendly terms with Suslov. Similarly, Farkas' allegiance was to the NKVD.

SWARTZ: Why did so many of Rákosi's supporters initially seek refuge with the Chinese embassy?

RADVANYI: They were desperate, and were looking to all the Communist states for support. But Ho Te-ching turned them away and suggested that they try the Soviets instead. Ho was hoping for a solution to the crisis that would preserve Communism in power while dealing a blow to this "great power chauvinism;" fully three years before the split between Moscow and Peking became apparent, Ho was already speaking out, albeit carefully, against Soviet domination of the international Communist movement.

The Russians, for their part, were suspicious of any Chinese initiatives in Eastern Europe. When the Chinese suggested that the Hungarian military should be reorganized along the lines of "people's militias," the idea was not very well received on the Soviet side. It was one of the objectives of the leadership in Peking at the time to try to increase Chinese influence in Eastern Europe, which naturally meant a challenge to Moscow. The Hungarian government found the Chinese very receptive, and maintained quite friendly relations with the PRC as late as 1960.

SWARTZ: As far as you know, did any members of the Chinese leadership individually have particularly strong interests in Eastern Europe?

RADVANYI: Chou En-lai came to Eastern Europe, but I would say that his visit simply reflected the Chinese view that the PRC had the right to suggest advice on any issue within the international Communist movement on which they perceived the Soviets to be proceeding incompetently.

SWARTZ: What do you believe to have been the role of the Soviet military in the deliberations underway in Moscow during the Hungarian Revolution?

RADVANYI: It's very hard to know. On the other hand, it is clear that the Soviet troops stationed in Hungary were reluctant to fight. Many Hungarians had learned Russian and were able to speak with the Red Army soldiers; some even gave the Russians flowers. But when Khrushchev and Zhukov decided to crush the Revolution they used fresh troops, from Central Asia, rather than "contaminated" forces. I spoke with one of these Asian soldiers, who had been told he would be fighting in Egypt and who thought the Danube was the Suez canal.

SWARTZ: Do you think that the Soviet military delegation that negotiated with Maléter knew that the KGB was going to come in and arrest the Hungarian side?

RADVANYI: No, I don't think that they knew. Serov couldn't take the chance that Malinin or one of his people would look nervous or in some other way give away what was about to happen. By not telling Malinin, the KGB was making the operation as simple as possible, as likely as possible to succeed. Of course I am only speculating, but I know the Russians pretty well, and that is how I would expect the KGB to proceed.

SWARTZ: Do you think that Andropov was already working for the KGB?

RADVANYI: No, although he had links with the NKVD which went back to World War II. In 1967 he was appointed head of the KGB only because Brezhnev was involved in a power struggle with Shelepin and wanted someone loyal to keep the KGB under strict control. During the Hungarian Revolution Andropov answered to the CPSU and not to Serov or anyone else in the KGB.

SWARTZ: Did most Hungarians see as the model for the Revolution a Yugoslav-style Communism or an Austrian-style neutrality?

RADVANYI: Imre Nagy was interested in bringing about something similar to what existed in Yugoslavia. Nagy would have done much more than Gomulka did in Poland: the New Economic Mechanism, for example, which Kádár has put into place, was originally one of Nagy's ideas. Many of Kádár's current economic advisors were at one time working for Nagy.

But the Hungarian political parties which resurfaced during the Revolution wanted a system of government like in Austria, and that was a big mistake.

SWARTZ: What was the role of the Romanian government during the Revolution?

RADVANYI: Gheorghiu-Dej was terrified that a revolt might break out in Romania as well. He and Ulbricht were the two East European leaders most vocal in demanding that Khrushchev do something about the situation in Hungary. What's more, he had many of the Hungarians in Romania rounded up and put into special camps. The Romanians were very clever, and eventually convinced Khrushchev to withdraw all Soviet troops from Romania.

SWARTZ: Was anyone in the Nagy government aware that Khrushchev and Malenkov had flown to Brioni on

November 2 to meet with Tito, in the secret meeting which Micunovic describes in his memoirs?

RADVANYI: No, no one was aware of it. By the way, I got to know Micunovic later, when he and I served in Washington at the same time; from what I have read his memoirs seem accurate. Anyway, during the Revolution there was a lot of talk in Budapest about Tito, whether he would be with us or against us, and so forth. Later there were rumors that he had made a deal with the Russians, but no one was ever sure. Imre Nagy certainly never knew what had happened at Brioni.

SWARTZ: That would make sense. Why else would Nagy have trusted the Yugoslavs enough to take refuge in their embassy?

RADVANYI: When the Russians returned in force, Nagy could have flown out of the country - there was a plane available. But he adamantly refused to leave Hungary. Instead he made a compromise and went to the Yugoslavs.

SWARTZ: Wouldn't a Western embassy have been safer?

RADVANYI: Maybe, but Nagy was a Communist, and even with the Russians at his doorstep he would not turn to the West. In my opinion, Tito tried to save Nagy right up until the last minute. There was no Yugoslav-Soviet deal to arrest Nagy, and in the end the Yugoslavs were furious with the Soviets and protested formally.

Tito was instrumental, as Micunovic writes, in getting Khrushchev to accept Kádár. Tito was still hoping that some form of national Communism would hold power in Hungary. But for the Yugoslavs, as much as for the Chinese, the Mező affair was a turning point in their thinking.

SWARTZ: Why do think that Kádár changed sides?

RADVANYI: After the Mező affair, Andropov, with the help of the KGB or the GRU, approached Münnich to see if he would be willing to head a new government. But Münnich said he wouldn't do it, because he was a "Muscovite" - he had spent the war in the Soviet Union. However, he was able to convince the Soviets that Kádár would make a better leader and would have some degree of credibility in the eyes of the people. So Münnich was told to go speak with Kádár to see if he would come over, and Münnich was able to convince him. I know that this account is true, because Münnich told it to me himself.

Kádár had been upset about the way things were going, particularly about the Mezõ affair, so that even though he had threatened that same day to fight the Russians with his bare hands he agreed to go with Münnich. They were driven to the Soviet embassy, and the Soviets flew them to Uzhgorod.

SWARTZ: So Münnich had been in contact with the Soviets for some time, well before the Mezõ affair?

RADVANYI: Definitely. Even though Münnich supported Nagy, and was personally close to Nagy (the two of them had even shared an apartment in the Soviet Union), he still thought it expedient to stay in contact with the Russians.

SWARTZ: Do you think that there was anything the West could have done to have helped the Hungarian Revolution succeed?

RADVANYI: If Eisenhower hadn't announced three times that the United States had no intention of taking military steps to help Hungary, then maybe Imre Nagy could have had a chance to stabilize the situation. Khrushchev was always conscious of the American nuclear superiority, and would caution us not to provoke the United States. So there is no advantage, when dealing with the Russians, in making your intentions known; let the Kremlin worry about the possible consequences of their actions.

APPENDIX O:

INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS ROGERS

Camp Hill, PA: August 1, 1986

SWARTZ: Mr. Rogers, when were you first assigned by the Foreign Service to the Legation in Budapest?

ROGERS: I began my tour in Budapest in August 1953. I had spent a year studying economics at the University of Michigan, and was then sent to Budapest as an Economic Officer. A friend of mine was already working in the Legation, and he recommended me to the Minister, Christian Ravndal.

SWARTZ: So at the time of the Hungarian Revolution you were working on economic affairs?

ROGERS: No, after my first two years in Hungary I switched functional areas; I had become more interested in political affairs, and wanted to stay in Budapest another two years. For a while I was the Second Secretary, and then became First Secretary. There was really no "Political section" to speak of, but I was responsible for reporting to the Chargé and the Minister on political affairs. I served in that capacity until returning to the States in November 1957.

SWARTZ: From the instructions that you were sent from Washington dealing with economic affairs in 1953 and 1954, what did you perceive to be the policy of the United States toward the New Course that Imre Nagy instituted in Hungary as Premier?

ROGERS: I don't think that the United States had a policy toward Hungary at all. After all, we had very little trade or other contact with Hungary; in fact, the major American goal toward Hungary at the time that Ravndal was made Minister (1952, I believe) was to obtain the release of several American airmen that the Hungarians had forced down over Hungary.

During Nagy's first tenure as Premier, the Legation had only minimal contact with anyone in the Hungarian government outside the Protocol section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I dare say that in the whole time he was in Hungary, Ravndal never once had a serious conversation with Imre Nagy or with any of the top Hungarian leaders.

SWARTZ: Was that because none of the Legation staff tried to develop contacts with the Hungarian regime, or because American overtures were rebuffed?

ROGERS: Both. If I needed to meet with someone at the Hungarian Foreign Trade Ministry I could do it, and occasionally did. But since we had very little trade with Hungary, had no intention of making loans to Hungary, and were not about to grant Most Favored Nation status to Hungary there really wasn't much to talk about.

Moreover, Imre Nagy was not a very strong leader; he knew that close or numerous associations with Westerners would be suspect, and we knew it as well. Furthermore, since the influence of McCarthyism was still strong, and since Nagy was still a Communist, I suppose Washington's attitude was simply to sit back and let matters take their course.

SWARTZ: Looking at the period in broader terms, did John Foster Dulles' public call for the liberation of the Soviet satellites mean that the United States pursued a policy of "the worse, the better" in Eastern Europe? For example, was it an American goal to try to undermine or belittle the New Course?

ROGERS: We received almost no instructions from Washington that commented upon the New Course, except for periodic guidance from the intelligence bureaus outlining their information requirements. I don't think that we were expected either to oppose it in some fashion or to support it. In general, communication between Washington and the Legation on developments within Hungary was a one-way street, with most of the talking coming from our end.

But as far as the broader question is concerned, I think that Dulles' call for liberation was mostly just campaign rhetoric. The proof of the pudding was that when the opportunity came, in 1956, nothing was liberated. Moreover, liberation was a goal that was never conceptually related to liberalization: I would be very surprised if Dulles ever envisioned a Communist country evolving, as in the case of China today, into a country with which the United States could develop close relations.

SWARTZ: Yet the precedent really had already been set. The Truman administration seems to have been able to stomach supporting Tito in his feud with Stalin; in fact, backing the Yugoslavs was seen to be in the national interest.

ROGERS: I don't recall a single indication, during any of my four years in the Legation in Budapest, that Washington gave any thought at all to coaxing Hungary into a posture similar to that of Yugoslavia. After all, the

presence of Soviet troops made the Hungarian situation very different from Yugoslavia's.

SWARTZ: What sort of instructions would the Legation receive from Washington?

ROGERS: We didn't get very many. Regarding economic affairs, there was always a certain low-level interest in Washington about what was happening in Hungary - for example, the desk officer for Hungary would inquire about Hungarian crop production or something - but there wasn't a lot more than that. The CIA or the intelligence bureau at State periodically would make requests of us for certain data, but it was never anything important enough to merit Dulles' attention.

SWARTZ: Were there also requests for information on military developments within Hungary?

ROGERS: Yes, and the military attaché generally handled that sort of thing. However, everyone in the Legation was alert for information which could have a bearing on military affairs, such as road conditions, bridge construction, industrial production that had military applications, and so on. We also spent a lot of time trying to determine the location of the Hungarian jamming stations and making assessments of the Hungarians' success in blocking the reception of VOA and RFE. But having been in other posts before and since, I can vouch that working in Hungary was quite unusual, in that there was almost no dialogue between the United States and the host government.

SWARTZ: When, if ever, did that change? Did there come a point at which Hungarian officials became more accessible?

ROGERS: The Hungarians never became very accessible, but in any case it was not until 1956 that there was any real interest in Washington with what was happening in Hungary.

SWARTZ: In 1956, did Legation staff have more success in making contacts with the Hungarian opposition than with Rákosi's and Gerő's people?

ROGERS: I wouldn't use the term "opposition," because until just before the outbreak of the Revolution there really was no organized structure linking these people. Instead, there were a number of small groups and of individuals of varying significance, some of whom were interested in talking with Americans. My wife and I became friendly with a number of Hungarian citizens - through our church, for example - but none of them could claim to speak for other Hungarians or for any "opposition."

SWARTZ: But it was no secret that Imre Nagy (who although out of the government was not being detained) was advocating changes in the system, and that he had a circle of widely known associates. Through 1956, were any efforts made to speak with Nagy or with his advisors?

ROGERS: As 1956 unfolded, we were very interested in finding out what the thinking was in Nagy's group, but there was no concerted effort to make contact: I don't believe that any of us, including Ravndal, ever tried to talk with Nagy. The logical question, of course, is "Why not? What's a Legation for?" and in looking back, I must say that it's not easy to give a convincing answer. I guess that although we were very busy trying to get information, we just assumed that any overtures on our part would not be welcomed by Nagy or his people. The British, who were usually quite well informed, didn't try to speak with Nagy either, and as far as I know neither did the French or the other Western representatives. The Yugoslavs may have been different, but the rest of us were very isolated. In retrospect it is clear that we didn't make the effort which we should have.

SWARTZ: From what you're saying, I assume that Washington never sent instructions asking the Legation to make contact with Nagy or his advisors.

ROGERS: That's correct. I should mention, though, that I (and others, particularly Anton Nyerges, the Press Attaché) went to a few of the public meetings of the Petöfi circle and of other writers' groups. And we had some contact with Miklós Gimes, whom we actually had recommended to visit the States as an observer of the US election (but a visa was denied him on the grounds that he was a communist!). Still, we were very cautious: even in Gimes' case we did not seek to establish continuing contacts.

SWARTZ: Did you have contact, such as at official receptions, with the representatives of the other Communist states?

ROGERS: We had good contacts with the Yugoslavs, a number of whom were particularly friendly. For instance, I got along quite well with Milan Georgievic, who was the First Secretary of the Yugoslav embassy and one of the two Yugoslav officials on the bus with Imre Nagy and his companions when they were released from the Yugoslav embassy. In his conversations with me, Georgievic referred to the agreement with the Hungarian government which the Yugoslavs had signed regarding the release of Nagy, and I believe he also mentioned a similar agreement with the Soviets (something the Yugoslavs certainly should have had). According to Georgievic,

the bus had traveled only two blocks from the embassy when it was boarded by a Russian colonel, who ordered the Yugoslavs off.

SWARTZ: Veljko Micunovic, Belgrade's ambassador to Moscow in 1956, has claimed that the Soviets shelled the Yugoslav embassy in Budapest while Nagy was there, killing one Yugoslav diplomat. Was that incident, with all its strong-arm implications, ever discussed?

ROGERS: I recall it, but I don't know whether we discussed it, though I spoke with Georgievic (who was a neighbor of ours) pretty regularly throughout the crisis. For example, at one point Georgievic was trapped at the other end of the city by the fighting, and he phoned us to ask whether we could get some milk to his wife, who was home sick with their baby and lived only a block or so from the Legation. But I should add that for much of the period following the Soviet invasion I was not present in Hungary.

SWARTZ: Why was that?

ROGERS: I helped escort a convoy of Legation wives and families to Austria, and then spent a few days there. That was my second visit to Vienna in this period, as I had been in Austria a few days prior to the Soviet invasion as well (on October 29 and 30, I believe); the Legation had temporarily lost the ability to transmit cables, so it had been necessary to carry the most important cables to Vienna by hand for transmission from our embassy there.

Then on November 2, when rumors spread that the Soviets might be coming back, we sent the remaining wives and dependents, accompanied by our financial officer, out in a convoy toward Austria. Russian guards turned them back at the border, however, and they returned to Budapest. At that point our new Chief of Mission, Thomas Wailes, arrived in Hungary, and he felt that we should try again to get our families out. He suggested that each officer accompany his family to the border, and then come back to Budapest once everyone had crossed safely into Austria.

Accordingly, I and a number of others from the Legation joined our families in a convoy toward Austria on November 3. But when we reached the border, the Russians again turned the convoy back, the presence of many US diplomats and Red Cross personnel notwithstanding. We then spent two nights just outside Hegyeshalom, and it was in that period that Soviet forces began to crush the Revolution. Eventually we were allowed to cross the border, but the Soviets would not let anybody from our group cross back into Hungary.

So I and the other Legation officials that were in the group continued on to Vienna and stayed there about a week.

SWARTZ: How many Legation personnel did that leave in Budapest?

ROGERS: As I recall, the convoy to Vienna included myself (the Legation's senior Political officer), the Administrative officer, the Financial officer, and a couple of staff people. In Budapest, then, that left the Minister (Wailes), the Chargé (Spencer Barnes), the Press attaché (Nyerges), the other Political officer (Gaza Katona), and, I believe, the agricultural attaché (Bryce Meeker). Barnes, who was my direct boss, ran the Legation from when Ravndal left in August until Wailes' arrival in November.

SWARTZ: When did the Legation first begin to have problems sending out cables?

ROGERS: We sent out a number of cables on October 23, the day there were the major demonstrations in front of the Bem and Petöfi statues, and we got out a long cable shortly before midnight. It was sometime later that night that communications broke down. So were able to report back to Washington about Gerö's speech, but not about the shooting at the radio station.

I remember that October 23 was a very hectic day. When the demonstrations broke out, I hurried over to cover them, then rushed back to the Legation to send out a cable describing what had happened. That evening, my wife and I, along with John Maccormac, a New York Times correspondent who was in town, and Ivan Boldizsár, a Hungarian journalist, had been invited to dinner at Endre Márton's, and I still hoped to be able to go. But while I was at home preparing for dinner I got a call urging me to get over to the radio station, which I did. I saw a lot of turmoil there, but as of then there had been no shooting. So my wife and I kept our dinner engagement, but before too long we all received word that violence had broken out at the radio station, and everyone left.

SWARTZ: When were communications with Washington restored?

ROGERS: For most of the day on October 24 we were still able to use the open Telex line, which could handle encoded cables. But then that went down as well, and for the next several days we were unable to transmit. It was during that period that the assistant military attaché (Tom Gleason) and I went to Vienna in order to have the Legation's cables sent out from there.

SWARTZ: Aside from the cables being sent in by the Legation, did the State Department have any other sources of information about what was going on in Hungary?

ROGERS: I don't know how rapidly VOA and RFE monitoring of Hungarian radio was available in Washington. The British in Budapest were sending encoded messages out over their radio, and London may have passed them on to Washington. I was in close contact with my opposite number in the British embassy, Christopher Cope, and I know that they were sending out quite a lot of stuff. I might mention also that when we came back from Vienna, on October 31 or so, we brought special radio equipment with us which we were able to use for about a week, until the Hungarians spotted it and told us to stop using it. To make sure that our earlier cables were received, we transmitted ourselves all of the cables which we had brought to Vienna for transmission.

SWARTZ: Did you meet with Ambassador Thompson while you were in Vienna?

ROGERS: Yes, we met with him as soon as we arrived, and filled him in on what was happening in Hungary. He got on the phone to Washington right away and told the people at State some of what we had said, adding that a batch of cables would be sent shortly giving the details. Naturally he couldn't go into policy issues over the phone. However, a number of personnel issues were discussed - the safety of various friends and relatives, and so on. Later, while still in Vienna, we got a cable from Washington asking whether we thought we would be able to get the radio equipment into Hungary.

SWARTZ: Did Ambassador Thompson give his own perspective on the Hungarian Revolution?

ROGERS: As I recall, he spent most of the time asking questions and didn't really share his own views. But I was concerned chiefly with finding out what the other American embassies in Eastern Europe were reporting: the Legation had not been able to receive cables for several days, and we particularly wanted to know what was going on in Moscow.

SWARTZ: But is it therefore also true that the Legation was not getting any instructions from Washington at the time?

ROGERS: That's right.

SWARTZ: When you arrived in Vienna on October 29, were there any instructions waiting for you, any guidance from Washington on American policy toward the Revolution?

ROGERS: No. There were never any instructions, even after communications between Washington and Budapest were reopened. The only "guidance" we ever received were copies of the State Department's public statements on the situation in Hungary.

SWARTZ: Several of the cables from the Legation which I have seen urged Washington to offer economic and diplomatic support to the Imre Nagy regime. Did the State Department or any other body in the government take up those suggestions?

ROGERS: Not as far as I know, and I wrote a good number of those cables myself.

SWARTZ: From your vantage point in Budapest, did you think that the United States really could do anything to affect the course of events in Hungary?

ROGERS: Yes, I did. But you have to understand that we assumed that there was much more deliberation going on in Washington than there really was. We were very hopeful that the US would urge Hammarskjöld or some other top UN people to come to Hungary, and I think we mentioned several times that Eisenhower should approach Bulganin to give him assurances about American intentions. At the start of the Revolution, we thought that the US should urge both the Hungarians and the Soviets to use restraint, since we were concerned that things in Hungary would go too far.

On the other hand, I don't think that Soviet policy was affected to any great deal by what the United States did or didn't do.

SWARTZ: Did the Imre Nagy regime ever communicate directly with the Legation?

ROGERS: Only once, I believe. Late in the day on November 1, Barnes was called into the Hungarian Foreign Office, where he was given a note. The note (which I reviewed with Barnes that evening) was a message to the Four Powers formally informing of them of Hungary's decision to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact and assume the status of a neutral state. Nagy sent a telegram with almost the identical language to Hammarskjöld as well.

SWARTZ: What exactly did the Hungarians want the United States to do?

ROGERS: To support their neutrality, but as far as specifics go I don't know exactly what they expected.

SWARTZ: Did the United States make any response to the Hungarians on this matter?

ROGERS: I don't think so. We sent the text of the note to Washington, but I don't know whether we made any recommendations to go with it. Wailes arrived the next day, and I don't recall his making any suggestions on the subject.

SWARTZ: Was the Foreign Office's note the first communication between the Nagy regime and the United States?

ROGERS: I think so. We'd had other contacts with the Hungarian Foreign Office, but not for the purpose of exchanges between our two governments. For example, when our communications went down, we protested as strongly as we could. This was to no avail (we were told the breakdown was for technical reasons, which we knew was not the case). Then we asked the Hungarian Foreign Office whether they could send a coded message for us to Washington (that is not usual diplomatic practice, as you might guess), and they refused. However, they agreed to send a short uncoded message for us to their mission in Washington, which would be passed on to the State Department. So we wrote a brief message for them to send, saying that all Legation personnel were safe.

We also tried the phone, both direct to Washington and to our embassies in Prague and Moscow, but without success.

SWARTZ: In your estimation, why didn't the United States give Imre Nagy's regime more tangible diplomatic support?

ROGERS: There were several things operating against any effective diplomatic action on the part of the US government. There was a Presidential election underway, Dulles was hospitalized, the Suez crisis had broken out, and so on.

SWARTZ: Are you implying, then, that in a perfect setting, with no elections or other crises, American policy would have been different?

ROGERS: I'm not sure. Absent elections, absent Dulles' illness, and most important, absent Suez, the first and most logical move for the US (and for the West) would have been to urge a UN presence. Under the physical conditions in Hungary in late October, Hammarskjöld certainly could have gotten to Budapest, and the Nagy government would have welcomed him. I don't know how the Soviets would have reacted, but the visit might have changed history.

Recently I saw a quote from one of Hammarskjöld's aides, who said that Hammarskjöld could handle only one crisis at a time, and that he decided Suez would be it. So from the start of the uprising in Hungary the United States should have put pressure on Hammarskjöld to act.

Similarly, we should have tried harder to establish a better relationship with Nagy, to persuade him not to go too far, not to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact. An effective American Minister in the Legation at the time might have been able to do that. And if Nagy had been able to carry that position, perhaps things would have been different. But no American government was going to urge such a course, and in any case it was not clear that Nagy had the power to restrain his own government.

SWARTZ: Did the Legation ever specifically recommend to State that a UN delegation be sent to Hungary?

ROGERS: We were very much aware of the rumors prevalent in Hungary that such a visit would take place, but I don't recall whether in our cables we made a specific recommendation, alluded to the rumors, or passed over the subject altogether. It's possible that we felt a UN visit was such an obvious thing to do that we didn't see the need to spell it out to Washington.

SWARTZ: Why did the Legation feel that it was a good idea for the United States to give the Soviets assurances about American intentions in Hungary?

ROGERS: We thought that calming the Russians' fears about American involvement in Hungary might reduce the chances of Soviet military intervention. Our assurances to Moscow were designed to tilt the cards in favor of the Kremlin moderates, in favor of those who might try to settle the issue in Hungary without relying on force.

SWARTZ: But wouldn't American assurances have had exactly the opposite effect, strengthening the hand of those Soviet leaders who most wanted to intervene, since they would be able to argue that there was no risk of getting into a confrontation with the United States?

ROGERS: There is a certain logic to that, but we were not fully aware of what was going on in Moscow. At the time we clearly felt that some assurance to the Russians that we were not going to make Hungary into a member of NATO was very useful.

SWARTZ: What was the view of the nature of the Soviet leadership within the Legation, or - to the extent you could characterize it - within the State Department as a whole? Was a struggle seen to be going on between

Khrushchev and Malenkov or some of the others, or was Khrushchev seen to be pretty firmly in control?

ROGERS: Throughout the late summer and early autumn of 1956 we were quite surprised that the Soviets were not cracking down in Hungary, since it seemed to us that the usual thing for the Soviets to have done would have been to arrest everyone who was demanding freedom. We decided that the most likely explanation for Soviet inaction in Hungary was disagreement within the Kremlin on how to proceed. I don't know whether we tried to determine the specific positions of the various Soviet leaders, but we could see that Moscow did not have the solid policy that it had maintained in the past.

SWARTZ: Was the Legation aware of the presence of Mikoyan and Suslov in Budapest on two occasions during the Revolution?

ROGERS: Yes, we were. We had a rough idea of their comings and goings, but no inside information about the content of any of their discussions.

SWARTZ: Was it known that Khrushchev and Malenkov had flown to Yugoslavia on November 2 to meet with Tito?

ROGERS: That was certainly not known within the Legation, and I doubt that anyone in Washington was aware of it either.

SWARTZ: Within the Legation, or within the State Department, was there ever any consideration given to encouraging Imre Nagy to negotiate with the Soviet Union on revising the Warsaw Pact?

ROGERS: Not that I recall. However, I think you have to keep in mind how hectic things were during the Revolution and how frantically pressured everyone was (I lost ten pounds during the week). On many occasions since, I've looked back over the cables from the period and asked myself, "Well, why didn't we do this or that?" There certainly are a lot of things which we might have done but that we did not do. But the place which surpassed us in this respect was the State Department back in Washington.

APPENDIX P:

INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM STEARMAN

Washington, DC: June 5, 1986

SWARTZ: Professor, what was your position at the time of the Hungarian Revolution?

STEARMAN: During 1956 I was an official at the United States Mission to West Berlin. On November 3, however, I was assigned to the embassy in Vienna on TDY.

SWARTZ: Had there been any expectation at all within the State Department that a major uprising was about to take place in Hungary?

STEARMAN: Nobody in the government expected a revolt in Hungary; at least there was no such intimation in any of the cables that I saw.

SWARTZ: What role did the US embassy in Vienna play during the crisis?

STEARMAN: First of all, for most of the period in question, our legation in Budapest was cut off. Accurate information about what was happening in Hungary was very hard to come by. In Vienna, Ambassador Thompson didn't want any Americans near the border, but I pretended that I didn't hear his instructions and went anyway. There, I was able to see the Soviet troops try to prevent Hungarians from leaving the country, and talked with the refugees who managed to make it over the border. I shuttled back and forth between the embassy and the border, in effect being the only source that the US had on Hungary during much of this period. In many cases, I was talking with people who had been in Budapest only two hours before.

SWARTZ: Why did Ambassador Thompson insist that embassy personnel stay away from the border?

STEARMAN: From the start of the Hungarian Revolution until the moment the border was finally sealed, there were all sorts of Americans wandering around Hungary - journalists, welfare people, adventurers, and so on - and Thompson, who was a cautious diplomat, didn't want official Americans welcoming freedom fighters into Austria. He was afraid that the Soviets might use any official US presence on the border as propaganda against us and against the Hungarians, which made sense. The problem, of course, was that by issuing an

order like that, he couldn't find out what was going on at the border.

SWARTZ: Did you ever cross into Hungary?

STEARMAN: Accompanied by Austrian officials, I crossed the border south of Sopron and walked for about an hour or so, until we reached Austrian enclaves within Hungary. These enclaves were areas which had once been owned by Austrian farmers and which by the Treaty of Trianon were still legally Austrian territory, although it was not widely advertised. From these areas I watched the Soviet troop deployments and interrogated refugees. The Soviets, along with pro-Soviet Hungarian border guards, did their best to prevent refugees from leaving the country, in several cases even chasing people across the frontier into Austria proper. I phoned the information in to my contacts at the embassy, who were protecting my role from the ambassador, and they passed it on as "refugee sources."

SWARTZ: What did the Austrian border guards do during all of this?

STEARMAN: It's important to keep in mind that there was no "iron curtain" separating Austria and Hungary at this time, since the Hungarians had dismantled all the physical obstacles along the frontier in May. There were no longer any mine fields, and the rusty barbed wire was all coiled up. The Austrians had marked the exact border with flags, since the Hungarians fleeing the country would need a marker to know that they had reached Austria.

The Soviets had tanks, artillery, and the better part of two divisions in western Hungary, whereas the Austrian side of the border was patrolled by gendarmes and customs officials, armed only with World War One carbines. Nevertheless, they refused to be bullied by the Russians. Soviet soldiers who chased refugees across the border risked getting shot. One Austrian guard shot a Soviet soldier in the head some thirty yards inside Austria and reportedly later received an award for it. On the other hand, the Austrians refused to allow Hungarians who had escaped into Austria to return to Hungary and fight the Russians; all Hungarians were disarmed upon their arrival in Austria, and their weapons were not returned.

By the end of the crisis in Hungary, the Soviets were absolutely furious with Austria. After all, the Austrian government provided the Hungarian freedom fighters with a great deal of material assistance

(medicine and food, not arms), openly gave the freedom fighters political support, and facilitated the entry into Austria of well over 150,000 Hungarian refugees. While the major Western countries were all floundering around wondering what to do, the Austrians actually sent Moscow a diplomatic note requesting that the Soviets evacuate Hungary. As I mentioned in my book, the Austrians were remarkably courageous, considering that they had been independent for only a year and maintained armed forces of only 30,000 men.⁷⁹⁷ The Soviets blasted the Austrians for a long time after the Revolution.

SWARTZ: There has been a lot of speculation about the role that Yugoslavia played during the Hungarian Revolution. Yugoslav Ambassador [to Austria] Uvalic, for example, apparently having just returned from Belgrade, told Bruno Kreisky on November 3 - the day before the invasion - that it was Belgrade's impression that the "Soviets do not know what to do" about Hungary.⁷⁹⁸ What do you make of that?

STEARMAN: Uvalic could have been speaking honestly and still have been quite wrong. I always found the Yugoslavs notoriously unreliable when it came to estimating what the Soviets were going to do; they were not usually very well informed about Soviet plans.

SWARTZ: However, according to the memoirs of Tito's ambassador to Moscow, Veljko Micunovic, Khrushchev and Malenkov flew to Brioni on November 2 to inform Tito of the impending invasion. What remains unanswered is whether Uvalic, along with all the other Yugoslav ambassadors, knew of that visit and of what was said.

797. In a public speech on October 26, Minister Helmer declared:

We hail the stirrings of freedom in Hungary because the re-establishment of democracy in Hungary would also bring normal relations on our Eastern border. In any case, it has again been proved that dictatorships can not last in the long run and that a system of terror, no matter how developed, is not able permanently to suppress the people's will for freedom.

Cited, along with other examples of Austrian defiance of the USSR over Hungary, in Stearman, The Soviet Union and the Occupation of Austria, pp. 174-177.

798. USVienna 1081, November 3, 1956. Archives 764.00/11-356.

STEARMAN: I think it's quite plausible that Tito's own people would not have been informed about the meeting with Khrushchev. But as you suggest, the Yugoslavs' role at the time, particularly with regard to their offer of asylum to Imre Nagy, has not been satisfactorily explained. The Yugoslavs claim that the Soviets' abduction of Nagy and the others after their release from the Yugoslav embassy in Budapest was not prearranged, but who knows?

SWARTZ: Do you think that the United States realistically could have done anything to prevent the Soviets from crushing the Revolution in Hungary?

STEARMAN: We might have been able to complicate things, but the USSR was bound to go in - they couldn't let Hungary go. Hungarians wanted to be neutral, like Austria, and wanted to reestablish their old ties with Austria. I think we should have put pressure on the UN to send in observers on October 27 or so, when the Soviets began to withdraw from Budapest. To my knowledge we made no effort along those lines. The end results might still have been the same, but on the other hand the Soviets might have felt inhibited from doing some of the more brutal things which they did. So we could have complicated things, but in the end the Soviets would probably have gone in anyway. And we were having major problems with the British and the French in Suez.

Besides, we had no access: Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Yugoslavia were all closed to us. The Czechs and Yugoslavs weren't about to give us permission to overfly their territory, and we weren't about to violate Austrian neutrality (which we had pledged to respect only a year before). Moreover, the Soviet army was already there, with their Ukrainian theater forces poised to come in if necessary. Despite our declared desire to roll back Communism, we realized that it was impossible to intervene directly in Eastern Europe, even in support of a popular revolution.

SWARTZ: Did you find that Hungarians expected American support, given the declared US goal of liberating Eastern Europe?

STEARMAN: Many of the refugees that I spoke with said that they expected American help, but none of them said specifically that our radio broadcasts had incited them. Still, I think that the very fact that we were broadcasting to Hungary at all may have emboldened many Hungarians and implied that we were interested in helping them gain their independence.

APPENDIX Q:

INTERVIEW WITH HORACE G. TORBERT

Washington, DC: March 14, 1985

SWARTZ: Ambassador, what was your official position in November 1956?

TORBERT: At that time I was Officer-in-Charge in the office of Austrian-Italian Affairs, in the European Bureau of the State Department. Prior to that I had served in Austria from 1950 to 1955. Some of my later assignments were as Director of the Office of Western European Affairs (1957-1958), Chargé d'Affaires in Budapest (1960-1962), and Ambassador to Bulgaria (1970-1973).

SWARTZ: In what way were you involved with American policy toward Eastern Europe during the Hungarian Revolution?

TORBERT: My concern during the uprising itself was entirely with its effects on Austria. In the uncertainty of the time we were at first concerned that the newly won independence of Austria might be threatened. We issued a public statement that we would view with great seriousness any military violation of Austrian territory. Our major time and effort for the next several months, however, was in coping with the refugee problem, which was totally beyond Austria's capacity to cope with by itself.

We mobilized our allies and international organizations, as well as our own agencies, to handle the immediate relief and eventual resettlement problems. In December I accompanied Vice President Nixon on a week's trip to Austria, whose primary purpose was to prepare public and Congressional opinion in the US to pass special legislation admitting a substantial portion of the refugees to the country. This was successful, and many of our allies acted likewise, in some cases taking a higher number of refugees in relation to their population than we did.

SWARTZ: What sorts of instructions were given to Ambassador Thompson in Vienna during the course of the Revolution?

TORBERT: I would say that Ambassador Thompson was far too experienced to need much instruction. But the Department did send the Budapest Legation a number of specific instructions, including permission to give Cardinal Mindszenty asylum in the Legation, which was contrary to our usual practice. Also, Edward T.

Wailes, who had arrived in Hungary in the middle of the crisis, was instructed not to present his credentials.

SWARTZ: Did anyone in the State Department anticipate the Revolution?

TORBERT: Since the uprising in Hungary was quite spontaneous, both in its timing and nature, most of the Hungarians involved didn't "expect" it, so I think it would be presumptuous to say that the State Department did, although the delicacy and volatility of various Hungarian elements was certainly known.

SWARTZ: What considerations, if any, were given to making use of the Revolution to implement the policy of Rollback?

TORBERT: The US reaction, and not just in the State Department, was largely one of damage control, both because there was no feasible military action to be taken and because we were preoccupied with the simultaneous Suez invasion by the British, French, and Israelis, which both the President and Secretary Dulles considered as presenting an unacceptable risk of world war. In retrospect, I think they were right, although at the time I wished we might have devoted our entire attention to beating the Soviets over the head about Hungary.

SWARTZ: Before the Revolution broke out, had there been any guidelines within the Department about how to deal with the situation in Eastern Europe?

TORBERT: There were definitely articulated policy guidelines on Eastern Europe, including Hungary. But to the best of my recollection, they did not include any reference to the Rollback doctrine - at least not in the sense of bringing it about by military means. If your question implies the thought that we might have instigated the uprising, I think that this idea was pretty much investigated and discredited. The nearest such implication involved the pre-uprising broadcasts by Radio Free Europe, which were alleged by some to have raised false hopes of US assistance. There was an extensive review of many months of RFE broadcast tapes, which I believe showed some evidence of indiscreet exuberance, but nothing to make the case for a clear indictment.

SWARTZ: What types of assistance did the government consider giving the revolutionaries - covert, diplomatic, military?

TORBERT: I don't have sufficient information to give you a categorical answer on that, but I think you may assume that anything the human mind could devise was discussed

at some point. Other than propaganda, intelligence gathering, and the handling of refugees and defectors, however, no operational instructions were issued, at least not to my knowledge.

SWARTZ: How closely were we in touch with the Nagy government?

TORBERT: We were in touch with the Nagy government almost as long as it existed, although I was not involved with our policy in Budapest then. We had almost no direct contacts with the successor, Soviet-installed government until I had some informal and inconclusive conversations with János Kádár in 1961 and 1962.

SWARTZ: How closely was the State Department's policy toward Eastern Europe coordinated with the other government agencies?

TORBERT: The Eisenhower Administration was the most thorough of any of the seven in which I served, as far as inter-agency coordination was concerned - although sometimes the paper work involved in that became a bit oppressive. Furthermore, Secretary Dulles was unquestionably in charge of foreign relations, and he often would talk to the President several times a day. The National Security Council set policy guidelines and its organ, the Operations Coordinating Board, chaired by Under Secretary Hoover, and its subcommittees closely monitored execution. This is not to say there were never slip-ups.

SWARTZ: Were the allies consulted on how to deal with the events in Hungary?

TORBERT: Sovereign governments do not easily reach complete consensus on entire policies toward third countries, but there were constant consultations with the allies, bilaterally and in international groups, particularly on ad hoc situations. At the time, though, Suez was a real impediment to allied cooperation.

SWARTZ: On the whole, do you feel that people in the government at the time saw the Hungarian Revolution more as an opportunity to weaken the Soviet chokehold on Eastern Europe or only as a potential World War Three?

TORBERT: There was inevitably a certain amount of euphoria among the ranks at this evidence of strong disaffection within the satellites, and a certain amount of wishful thinking that the Soviets would abandon the attempt to suppress it. Those most knowledgeable, however, recognized that nothing short of a full scale invasion across Czechoslovakia and neutral Austria - which we were not in a position to mount, and which would have

resulted in direct confrontation with the Soviet army and the possibility of nuclear escalation - would have any chance whatsoever of success. There were a few others who thought that a mobilization and threat of action might have caused the Soviets to pull back. The decision not to do so was made at the highest levels of the government, no doubt after some degree of consultation with our allies.

SWARTZ: In retrospect, do you feel that we should have been more willing to take certain risks to try to help the Hungarians in a tangible fashion?

TORBERT: I can't fault the government's decision. Dealing with the Communist challenge is a very long term process, complicated by a tendency to think of it in purely ideological terms, without adequate analysis of the organization and power structure aspects. Except in a minuscule country like Grenada, our ability to overthrow a Communist regime in a given country is almost non-existent without overwhelming popular disaffection and a willingness to take risks among that country's population. Our basic long term objective has got to be to make it clear that our system is more conducive to a country's development and welfare than the communist one.

In the meantime we have to maintain our resistance to communist subversion and propaganda, and keep our military strength at a high level. That doesn't mean that we shouldn't hold negotiations with the communist world in certain areas, but it does mean that we are in for a very long term stalemate, though we should be able to hold the competition to tolerable levels. This was not as clear to me in 1956 as it was now, and I assume the same may apply to others.

APPENDIX R:

INTERVIEW WITH MIKLOS VASARHELYI

New York, NY: December 18, 1986

SWARTZ: Mr. Vásárhelyi, how did you come to know Imre Nagy?

VASARHELYI: I was the editor of a Hungarian foreign language newspaper, where one of my colleagues was Imre Nagy's daughter. She was the newspaper's Russian editor, having grown up in the Soviet Union. Through her, I got to know Imre Nagy and his family. Secondly, when Nagy was named Premier in June 1953 I openly and fervently supported the New Course.

It was for this reason that in 1954, when Nagy formed the Office of Information of the chancellery, which was to have been the Premier's own propaganda agency and information outlet, I was made the deputy head. The head of the agency was Zoltán Szántó, a (newly named) Central Committee member who had many contacts in Moscow but was not familiar enough with the situation in Hungary. From this period on, I had direct contact with Nagy. I kept my post until April 1955, when Nagy was dismissed as Premier. In December 1955, Nagy was ousted from the Party, and so was I.

SWARTZ: During his tenure as Premier, did Nagy gain control over any of the Party propaganda organs?

VASARHELYI: No. The Party newspaper, Szabad Nép, was not under our control, whereas we had a lot of influence with Magyar Nemzet. We gave them political information and encouraged them to support the New Course. The headquarters of the Hungarian Party, under the leadership of Rákosi, was nominally in favor of the New Course, but in fact they did what they could to oppose it.

SWARTZ: Were you imprisoned at the time of the Purges?

VASARHELYI: No, fortunately I wasn't. Like Rajk and Kádár, I had spent the war in Hungary, as a member of the underground Communist Party. In 1949 Rajk was arrested, and later Kádár was as well; the vast majority of the old-guard Hungarian Communists were either arrested or demoted. Most of the people I had worked with during the war were arrested, but I was not. I was demoted from my position at Szabad Nép (in the first years after the war I had been on the editorial board) and was given a comfortable but

politically uninteresting position with a propaganda magazine.

SWARTZ: Who was the leader of the Party while it was underground?

VASARHELYI: That depends. For a time during the 1930s the leader was Rajk, and later the leaders were Kádár, Ferenc Donáth, and Gábor Peter. But for much of this time the Party in Hungary hardly even existed.

SWARTZ: During the period of the New Course, did you or Imre Nagy make any efforts to get support from other Communist states?

VASARHELYI: Our only outside source of support was from elements within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The Hungarian Party was the only Party in Europe to try to enact any reforms; the others - even the Italian Party under Togliatti - remained Stalinist. We had no support within the international communist movement.

SWARTZ: Was Malenkov the only Soviet leader to support the New Course?

VASARHELYI: Khrushchev supported it too, and so did Mikoyan. Even Suslov supported the New Course to a certain degree. But Molotov was against it, along with Kaganovich and Voroshilov - although his role was not very important. There is no question that Khrushchev was a big supporter of the New Course, but he became worried in 1955 that Imre Nagy was taking the New Course too seriously. He was concerned that Nagy was going too far in economic and social reforms and was trying to make Hungary too independent in foreign policy (though of course still socialist).

SWARTZ: Did Imre Nagy ever explicitly say that he wanted to see a more independent foreign policy?

VASARHELYI: Yes, he said it in private discussions, but it was also clear from his public statements. His line was essentially what one might call a Titoist line: a strong dictatorship of the proletariat (that is, a socialist state, with no thought of pluralism), but at the same time an independent country and Party.

SWARTZ: Did Nagy have good relations at the time with Tito?

VASARHELYI: No, he didn't. And unfortunately for Imre Nagy, the major event in the Soviet-Yugoslav rapprochement took place two months after Nagy's fall from power.

SWARTZ: But if Khrushchev was about to visit Yugoslavia, why do you think he would first allow Nagy to lose power in Hungary?

VASARHELYI: There was a certain logic to Khrushchev's thinking. It is true that the rapprochement with Tito was very important from the point of view of Soviet foreign policy, but at the same time Khrushchev wanted to make sure that the other socialist countries, particularly Yugoslavia's neighbors, did not take the same course as Tito.

SWARTZ: Do you think that Tito supported Imre Nagy?

VASARHELYI: Yes, he did. I am sure of that, because after Nagy gave up the Premiership, we, his group, his supporters, had continuing direct contact through the Yugoslav Embassy with the Yugoslav Party.

SWARTZ: I ask about Tito's view of Nagy because there is good reason to believe that Tito's mentor in Moscow was Andrei Zhdanov, at one time Malenkov's top rival, suggesting that since Malenkov supported Imre Nagy, Tito might have been wary of him.

VASARHELYI: That's a good argument, but it is very difficult to know for sure what goes on in Moscow. I can only say that the Yugoslavs made a lot of effort to keep in touch with Imre Nagy and his supporters.

SWARTZ: Did you, or any others in the Nagy group, have any contacts with Americans or with other Western representatives, particularly through the summer of 1956, as pressure built up in Hungary for Imre Nagy to return to power?

VASARHELYI: I didn't have any contact with Western officials, and as far as I know neither did anyone else. It is perhaps possible that somebody was speaking with the Americans, but I wouldn't know who. But based upon the US Legation's cables which I have seen, it seems to me that at least through the end of 1955 the Legation was not very well informed about what was going on in Hungary. They seem to have read Szabad Nép, but not Irodalmi Ujság.

SWARTZ: Were the Soviets that much better informed, with Andropov in charge of their embassy?

VASARHELYI: Of course, but that will always be the case. The logical consequence of the situation in Eastern Europe is that the Soviets will always be the best informed.

SWARTZ: Did Imre Nagy have any supporters in the Central Committee of the Hungarian Party?

VASARHELYI: Yes, but very few. There were really only two Central Committee members who were close to Nagy, Zoltán Szántó (an old Muscovite) and Lajos Fehér (a good friend of mine), who were brought in at the Party Congress in March 1954.

SWARTZ: During the Revolution, did many members of the Central Committee come around to supporting Imre Nagy, or did they remain opposed to him?

VASARHELYI: After the fall of Rákosi in July 1956, a number of important people in the Central Committee began to support Imre Nagy - Imre Mezö, József Köböl, Kálmán Pongrácz (the mayor of Budapest), and others. Many of them went to see Imre Nagy, tried to establish personal contacts with him.

SWARTZ: Is it true that when Mikoyan and Suslov came to Budapest on October 24, the Central Committee resisted replacing Gerö?

VASARHELYI: No. First of all, the person who wanted more than anyone for Imre Nagy to assume the Premiership was Gerö himself. During the night of October 23/24, before Mikoyan and Suslov had even arrived, Gerö phoned Khrushchev three times to tell him that the only possible solution to what was happening in Hungary was to make Nagy Prime Minister. Khrushchev resisted initially and then agreed. But there was absolutely no opposition within the Hungarian Party.

SWARTZ: Did the Central Committee formally ratify the change?

VASARHELYI: Yes, they had to formally ratify Imre Nagy's membership in the Politburo and his candidacy for the position of Premier. That would have taken place sometime during October 24 at Party headquarters.

SWARTZ: How did Hegedüs feel about giving up his position?

VASARHELYI: He was also in favor of Imre Nagy coming in. Like Gerö, he felt that by making Nagy Premier the whole mess would be resolved. But like the others, Hegedüs underestimated the seriousness of the problem. The top officials were all up in Party headquarters and not out on the street.

SWARTZ: Whose idea was it to replace Gerö?

VASARHELYI: First of all, the Russians had made a terrible mistake in July in picking Gerő to take Rákosi's place as leader of the Party. Rákosi, Gerő, and Farkas were all widely hated in Hungary; people knew they all stood for the same policies.

SWARTZ: Why didn't the Russians install Kádár in July?

VASARHELYI: They didn't trust him. Even in November they would have preferred Münnich, not Kádár. The Soviets always wanted to work with the Muscovites. In 1953, when the whole gang from Moscow had failed completely, the Soviets still wouldn't appoint a home Communist - they chose Imre Nagy.

SWARTZ: So in October 1956, whose idea was it to bring in Kádár?

VASARHELYI: It was absolutely a Soviet initiative, or, more accurately, a Soviet order. They thought that replacing Gerő with Kádár would somehow end the Revolution, which was silly.

SWARTZ: Did Gerő resist the Soviets' demand that he step aside?

VASARHELYI: No, he was always a very disciplined Communist, with a strong Comintern background. He never once disagreed with the Party.

SWARTZ: Why did he stay in Yugoslavia for such a long time in October? Didn't he realize what was happening back home?

VASARHELYI: They were fools. They had no idea how serious the situation in Hungary really was. It just goes to show how far these apparatchiks were removed from the way people felt. I asked Hegedüs this question myself, and that's what he told me - that it was simply completely shortsighted. And Hegedüs was with them in Yugoslavia; they all were there. The only one they left in Budapest was Lajos Acs, who had no power to do anything.

SWARTZ: Is it true that you were against Imre Nagy accepting the Premiership in October 1956?

VASARHELYI: Yes, but it wasn't just me. The majority of our group - Imre Nagy's friends - met together on the morning of October 23 and decided that Nagy should not accept the position without certain preconditions: major changes in the Central Committee, the replacement of Gerő by Kádár, and the promotion of several of Imre Nagy's friends to the

Politburo. But Nagy accepted the offer that evening practically without preconditions, and without consulting with us.

SWARTZ: But Gerő was replaced with Kádár.

VASARHELYI: Later. And until October 28, when the situation began to change, Nagy had no control over the Politburo at all.

SWARTZ: Is it true that until that point Nagy was for all intents and purposes a prisoner of the Party?

VASARHELYI: No, he was his own prisoner only. On the morning of October 25, Donáth, Losonczy, and I went to visit him and tried to convince him that he had made a big mistake accepting the Premiership and allowing the Party to speak in his name regarding the revolt. But it was to no avail - he rejected our views. He told us, "I am very sorry, but I can't argue with you now. I have a meeting of the Politburo which I have to attend, at which the Soviet comrades will be present." And so he left us.

SWARTZ: What was the position taken by Mikoyan and Suslov during their meetings with Imre Nagy on October 24-25?

VASARHELYI: They agreed with Nagy on every question. Later they even agreed to the multi-party participation in the government. Even Suslov agreed.

SWARTZ: Perhaps by then their agreement with Nagy was only a ploy; maybe they had already decided in Moscow upon intervention.

VASARHELYI: Maybe. I don't know. But Mikoyan and Suslov could see that the situation was desperate. Ferenc Jánosi, Nagy's son-in-law told me that Mikoyan had tears in his eyes when he spoke with Nagy. He said, "Comrade Nagy, we know that we are responsible for what has happened here. You are the last hope for socialism in Hungary. Do everything necessary to save it." And this was on October 30.

SWARTZ: Do you attach any significance to the fact that when Mikoyan came to Hungary in July to remove Rákosi he came without Suslov?

VASARHELYI: That may have been because Suslov had supported Rákosi for too long, so they didn't want to send him.

SWARTZ: Hadn't Suslov been in Budapest earlier?

VASARHELYI: That's right, he had been there in June. He was still supporting Rákosi, but he also met with Kádár for the first time. Kádár told us that his meeting with Suslov was pretty superficial. They didn't speak for that long; apparently Suslov just wanted to get an impression of him. But they agreed that Rákosi should remain the First Secretary. They felt that anything else would have been too much of a shock to the Party.

SWARTZ: Then could it have been Suslov who backed Gerő in July, once it had been decided that Rákosi would have to be replaced?

VASARHELYI: In July they wanted Hegedüs to replace Rákosi, but Hegedüs wouldn't accept. Hegedüs met Mikoyan at the airport, and during the ride back to Budapest, Mikoyan told Hegedüs, "Comrade Rákosi must leave, and we would like you to replace him as First Secretary." But, according to what Hegedüs later said, he didn't accept. So Gerő was made First Secretary and Kádár was put on the Politburo.

SWARTZ: Is it true that during the Revolution Károly Janza attempted some sort of coup, with the backing of the Soviet Embassy, against Imre Nagy?

VASARHELYI: No, it's not true. That's just another tale that's been spread around. The truth is that most of the members of Nagy's government were glad just to be alive, and they were all anxious that Nagy - whom they considered to be a true Communist - be able to hold his position. Besides, with what was anyone going to mount a coup? The army supported the Revolution and the AVH had fled for their lives. Nobody was preparing plots.

SWARTZ: During the Revolution, did any other Communist leaders, such as Tito or Gomulka, call Nagy to give their support?

VASARHELYI: Yes. Tito not only phoned but also sent Ambassador Soldatic as his personal messenger to Imre Nagy, to assure Nagy that he could count on Yugoslav support. The same happened with Gomulka; he sent his ambassador with a message of support.

SWARTZ: Did Nagy ask either the Poles or the Yugoslavs for anything specific?

VASARHELYI: Not as far as I know.

SWARTZ: To your knowledge, did the Poles ever give any indication that they would support an effort to

revise the terms of the Warsaw Pact, or even back a Hungarian withdrawal?

VASARHELYI: I'm not familiar with any Polish intervention of that sort, but I do know that the Nagy government was planning to send a Hungarian delegation under the leadership of Losonczy to Warsaw, in order to negotiate the withdrawal of Hungary from the Warsaw Pact.

SWARTZ: Was that to be a bilateral Hungarian-Soviet negotiation?

VASARHELYI: No, they were going to negotiate with all of the members of the Warsaw Pact, although the Soviets were obviously the most important.

SWARTZ: Had the Soviets agreed to the negotiations?

VASARHELYI: They hadn't said no.

SWARTZ: Did Nagy propose this to Mikoyan and Suslov?

VASARHELYI: No, this was on November 3, and Mikoyan and Suslov weren't there. Nagy made the proposal to Andropov, and Andropov behaved as any diplomat should and promised to communicate the message to Moscow. What Nagy had in mind was that while Losonczy was in Warsaw, he would go in person to the United Nations in New York. And at the same time he appointed a military mission under Pál Maléter and Ferenc Erdei to negotiate with the Soviets in Budapest.

SWARTZ: Do you think that the Soviet military team under General Malinin that negotiated with Maléter knew that the Hungarian delegation was going to be arrested?

VASARHELYI: From what I heard, the Soviet negotiators looked surprised when Maléter was arrested.

SWARTZ: Do you think that the United States could have played a positive role in affecting the course of affairs in Hungary?

VASARHELYI: Yes, but instead Eisenhower did the worst thing possible - he assured the Russians that the US was not interested in Hungary. Khrushchev could see that there were no American military preparations or alerts, that the United States wasn't even trying to bluff, so by his way of thinking he would have been a fool not to take advantage of the situation.

SWARTZ: Meanwhile the Chinese were supposedly urging him on, saying that the US was only a paper tiger?

VASARHELYI: And they were right.

SWARTZ: Regarding the role of Yugoslavia, when did Ambassador Soldatic approach Imre Nagy with the offer of asylum? Was it only in the early morning hours of November 4?

VASARHELYI: No, Soldatic raised the issue of asylum for Nagy with Zoltán Szántó on November 3, when Szántó visited the Yugoslav Embassy. But Szántó did not mention the offer to Nagy until the morning of November 4. Soldatic had never spoken directly to Nagy about asylum.

SWARTZ: Do you believe that Soldatic made the offer on explicit orders from Belgrade or on his own?

VASARHELYI: I am sure that to make such a significant offer he must have had orders from Belgrade, from Tito or Rankovic. I know for sure that Rankovic phoned Soldatic the first day that Nagy was at the Yugoslav Embassy, and told Soldatic that he should encourage Nagy to compromise with Kádár.

SWARTZ: As far as you know, had Soldatic been recalled to Belgrade at any point during the Revolution?

VASARHELYI: No, he had not been recalled.

SWARTZ: Did Imre Nagy know that Khrushchev had flown to Yugoslavia and met there with Tito?

VASARHELYI: He didn't know anything about it.

SWARTZ: Do you think that if he had known that he still would have sought refuge in the Yugoslav Embassy?

VASARHELYI: Certainly not.

SWARTZ: Did Soldatic know about Khrushchev's visit to Brioni?

VASARHELYI: He might have. I don't know. But I should stress that although Soldatic was formally the head of the embassy, the real power there was Rankovic's man, Osman Dikic.

SWARTZ: Why didn't Nagy take a plane to Vienna, which I understand he could have done?

VASARHELYI: He never seriously considered it. He was a Communist, and it would have been unimaginable to him to go to a Western bourgeois country.

SWARTZ: But you said just a moment ago that he wanted to go to the United Nations.

VASARHELYI: Yes, but in an official capacity, as the Hungarian Head of State, not as a refugee.

SWARTZ: Perhaps Nagy could have gone to Vienna only in order to have a secure place from which to negotiate with the Soviets, to set up a government-in-exile, not to seek asylum.

VASARHELYI: He never considered it; there is simply no question.

SWARTZ: Once he was in the Yugoslav Embassy, did Nagy negotiate with the Russians, or with Kádár?

VASARHELYI: Neither, as far as I know.

SWARTZ: Did Kádár offer Nagy a position in the government?

VASARHELYI: No, he said only that Nagy should leave the Embassy and go home, and that after Nagy was home he and Kádár could discuss the future. He never offered Nagy a position.

SWARTZ: Do you recall whether any Soviet tanks shelled the Embassy while you were there?

VASARHELYI: They didn't exactly shell the Embassy, but they fired on it and succeeded in killing the Yugoslav press attaché, Milovanov. He had a certain physical resemblance to Imre Nagy - he had a mustache and wore spectacles, although he was a younger man.

SWARTZ: Do you think the Soviet tank crew who fired on him looked through the window and thought that he was Nagy?

VASARHELYI: Absolutely. And they could never have done so without orders. But Nagy was in a rear part of the Embassy, so he was safe.

SWARTZ: Did you accompany Nagy to the Embassy?

VASARHELYI: No, I was not with Nagy at the time, although my family was with him in the Embassy. The Yugoslav diplomats had sent their cars around the city to pick the people whom Nagy had suggested, but I wasn't home when they picked up my family.

SWARTZ: Why were the Yugoslavs so eager to find all of you? Do you think that there might have been some secret deal between Tito and Khrushchev to turn you all over to the Russians?

VASARHELYI: No, but I think that Tito wanted to help the Soviets in the sense that he wanted the Kádár regime to get established. So by getting all of us out of the way, the Yugoslavs were helping Kádár.

SWARTZ: If that was all they wanted, did they offer you visas to Yugoslavia?

VASARHELYI: I think they wanted to, but they couldn't do it without Soviet agreement.

SWARTZ: But if the Yugoslavs were just doing Moscow a big favor, why would Soviet forces shell the Embassy and then arrest all the Hungarians?

VASARHELYI: The Soviet leadership was divided on what to do, and with time their goals changed. At first their main interest was only to get us out of the way, but then, as their relations with Yugoslavia worsened, they got other ideas. But I have no doubt that Khrushchev was still in charge, not Molotov, Zhukov, or anyone else.

SWARTZ: Micunovic writes that on November 3, before he could have had any idea that he would be imprisoned in Romania, Nagy sent a letter to Gheorghiu-Dej. Do you know anything about that?

VASARHELYI: I never heard of such a letter. However, Imre Nagy was the only one of us (the group arrested coming out of the Yugoslav Embassy) who knew what our destination was going to be when we were finally put aboard the airplane. During the one day we were held at the KGB barracks outside Budapest, Roman Walter, a representative of the Romanians, came to speak with Nagy. He officially offered the whole group asylum in Romania, and Nagy of course said no.

SWARTZ: Was Serov at the KGB facility when you were taken there?

VASARHELYI: I think so, but we never saw him.

SWARTZ: Did Kádár send any emissaries to negotiate with Nagy in Romania, or were the Romanians and Soviets in charge?

VASARHELYI: Some of us had contacts in Romania with Gyula Kállai, who was on the Hungarian Politburo at the

time. Kállai spoke with Lukács, Szántó, Vas, and [Szilard] Ujhelyi, but not with Nagy. He offered government posts to Lukács and Ujhelyi, and encouraged the others to disassociate themselves from the rest of us. But Lukács and Ujhelyi refused, and so they were able to return to Hungary only in 1958.

Of course, the Romanians came to see us frequently, and tried to get us to support Kádár. They told us to acknowledge that it had been a counterrevolution, and so on.

SWARTZ: Were you tried in Hungary or Romania?

VASARHELYI: We were brought back to Budapest and tried in Fő utca prison.

SWARTZ: Did Rákosi ever try to come back or to throw Kádár out?

VASARHELYI: Yes he did, but he never had a very serious chance, since Khrushchev was unwilling to hear of it. Even Molotov had no more use for him. Voroshilov was probably the only one who had ever gotten along with him personally.

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