December 31st 1968

Memorandum to Dr. Kissinger

From V.A. Walters

Subject: Eastern Europe

Following the enunciation of the Brezhnev doctrine most of Eastern Europe is in a state of ill concealed shock. What had seemed to be the road to greater freedom and participation in the political process has now been brutally blocked. et all eyes are on Czechoslovakia to see whether the Czech passive resistance is or is not effective against Soviet tanks.

Poland is engaged in a power struggle within its own Communist Party between Gomulka and Moczar. Each has an interest in ingratiating themselves with the Soviets while bearing inmind Polish nationalism andxenophobia

Romania is frightened of a Soviet Invasion uncertain whether a manifest disposition to resist any invasion will deter or provoke the Soviets. Romanian military personnel say they will fight and are more accessible than ever. Herein lie considerable opportunities in the intelligence field.

Bulgaria as always is the Soviet Unions most loyal satellite and seems to be a pawn to threaten and intimidate Yugoslavia by means of irredentist territorial claims on Yugoslav Macedonia

Hungary still disillusioned from its own experience of 1956 wearily and unenthusiastically follows the Soviet dictates

East Germany is perhps the most fragile, yet the most prosperous of allthe satellites. Yet the Soviets have had some success in engendering arivalry with West Germany. But the wall must remain for it is the only way to hide the failure of Communism as an economic system, andthis to the Soviets is more grave than its failure as a political system.

There has been as yet no purge in the Czech Armed forces and here too lie opportunities.

The Soviets and official propaganda machine of the satellites have done everything they could to portray the US as a sick society, torn by racial and social conflicts that has nothing to teach the countries of Eastern Europe. Multiple contacts between the Eastern European countries and us will help dissipate this illusion. Yet these must be measured so that we do not seem to be supporting or approving the regimes. The knowledge that the United States is a healthy strong society, capable of the immense technological achievement of sending men to the moon, that it has a strong purposeful government, that it willnot compromise on principle though it seeks peace will best sustain those who oppose the regimes of Eastern Europe as they await the day of the Russian Dubcek.

His paper sent to NSC (Navy) attached

December 12, 1968

Mr. Eric G. Lindahl
10401 Grosvenor Place
Rockville, Maryland
20852

Dear Mr. Lindahl:

Thank you for your note of November 30 and for your paper on the German-European question. I hope to have the opportunity of reading it soon.

Best regards,

Sincerely yours,

Henry A. Kissinger

DEC 9 1968

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

November 30, 1968

Dear Professor Kissinger:

I sincerely believe you will find interesting an informal paper I submitted in 1958 from Yokohama concerning, primarily, the German-European question. I submitted others in 1953, from Munich, and in 1960, in Copenhagen. In 1943-44 I recorded convictions against the "unconditional surrender" policy.

With 26 years in Service I am planning to take off a year (and probably quit after that), to write a small book on the unwisdom of American "positions" (laws, etc.) on "morality" questions.

Sincerely,

Eric G. Lindahl

10401 Grosvenor Place, Rockville, Md. 20852

Yokohama, December 15, 1958

A Foreign Policy Suggestion
Relating Principally To The
German Question

This policy contribution has as its main theme the "German Problem", but its initial proposal is a basic policy concept. While my suggestions regarding Germany may well prove to be unacceptable at this time to the Administration for reasons I do not understand, I believe that my first position is one which may be conceded by many policy planners to be essentially sound.

The most compelling American policy and foreign relations need in my view has long been to embrace a humbler approach or philosophy. I think it would be a very happy thing if we could somehow assume the attitude that 1) a great many of the wisest political minds in the world are found outside of the United States, and, 2) our own not infrequent unwisdom during the first half of this century has left us with many tangible moral obligations toward other countries. In other words, we should listen with open minds and with respect to the views of political thinkers in other lands, be they statesmen, diplomats, writers, or leaders in other fields. We should also face up to the undeniable fact that our own mistakes have had much to do with creating the terrible situations in which some countries now find themselves. Our mistakes were not those of the evil doer, but they were the mistakes of inadequate statesmanship, and some of them have been fearfully costly.

Our intervention in the first World War with our subsequent withdrawal from international responsibility was disastrous to

Europe's

Europe's postwar development. Our intervention in the second World War was sound and right, but premature demobilization and unwillingness to face realities after that war were catastrophic. If we had stayed out of the first war it would have ended in a compromise and Germany would have found its natural and inevitable place in Europe. Our demobilization of World War II and our readiness to gamble on Russia's honorable intentions gave that country the opportunities that "any cab driver" in Europe knew she was waiting for. Intervention followed by immature and inadequate postwar actions constitute meddling.

"Unconditional Surrender" was a policy so unwise as to make it stand out as one of history's most tragic mistakes. And those who had access to main-line diplomatic correspondence during the war will recall that we were urged by some of the best minds in Europe to abandon or greatly modify this concept.

We have done many acts of genuine statesmanship for which we all should be proud, but it will be admitted by any astute student of our foreign relations that our policies have all too often borne the mark of immaturity. In any event we are now in the game for fair and we owe ourselves and our friends the wisest performance we can achieve, which I believe requires greater flexibility and accommodati than we are in the habit of practicing.

Why do I indulge in this national self-examination at such lengt and emphasize our apparent past weakness? Because I am haunted by the fear that the immaturity that let us pursue the policy of "unconditional surrend

conditional surrender" has not yet passed. It is easy to say that we as individuals did not create that policy and to put it from our minds, but that policy was in a way typical of American moral-political thought.

If my approach seems presumtuous in view of the fact that I have not had a "reporting" career in my 16-year service, may I point with pride to a paper I wrote in October 1943 urging that the United States adopt a somewhat philosophic and more realistic view of the origins of the war. I took the position then and held it from then on that you cannot blame a people for its history. Our war was with the evil German leadership. I was convinced that "collective guilt" was rubbish and said so frequently. I was so saddened by our policy in 1944 that I very nearly accepted an offer by United Press to become a correspondent. If our Government had understood the German problem, men like Claus von Stauffenberg and Ludwig Beck and the others would have been able to save Germany from the tragic destiny fashioned by the Hitler leadership. Germany would have surrendered and we would have a different Europe today, a Europe free from Russian terror. I am of course not in the least unaware of how very much we have done for Western Europe in the past ten years, but I do think that we should not lose sight of our blunders. Understanding them and admitting them is a very good way to avoid further costly mistakes.

The following views regarding the existing German problem have

have been in the making for many years, subject as they no doubt are to certain obvious limitations, and they are presented frankly knowing very well that they are not popular views in Washington today. I hope, however, that these views will not be brushed aside as representing a position already rejected by the Department.

Those who do not fear Germany, and those who do not reject out-of-hand, ideas that appear to make substantial concessions to the Russians, may acknowledge that my thesis holds some promise of success. Its acceptance could result in a genuine improvement of U.S.-U.S.S.R. relations and it could alternatively at least put Russia on the spot for its rejection.

I first presented this thesis in a letter to a friend on the Policy Planning Staff in April 1953 from Munich. My thought at that time was to offer an alternative to EDC, which I considered doomed. My ideas were based among other things on the view that France should be a major force in a NATO which unconditionally guaranteed Germany's safety—rather than include Germany in an organization that she was bound to dominate. Another hypothesis was that we had nothing to fear, really, from Germany in this new era. In any event this was a calculated risk (at the worst) that we must take. In other words, we must gamble on Germany.

I recognize that much has taken place since 1953 and that we cannot go back to 1953, but what did not prove to be feasible then might now be, or eventually become, the only means of achieving a

complete

complete reunification of Germany. A German "confederation" is presumably the first step on the road to reunification now, but the basic unalterable condition for such reunification is the acceptance by us of Germany's loss from NATO. Dr. Arnold Toynbee was undoubtedly correct when he stated in January of 1956 that Germany could be reunited only if the East and West mutually pledged not to admit a unified Germany into either camp. Our commitments to Dr. Adenauer may make substantial modifications in our position extremely difficult, but is he not also sincerely determined to reunite Germany without war? Is he not determined to make some genuine progress toward a settlement during his own lifetime of Germany's territorial claims in the East? And does not Dr. Adenauer really want to help bring about the liberation of the captive peoples in the Satellite countries? Surely he does not really believe that standing on our existing policies can bring about these objectives.

I wrote in April 1953 that we should not bring Germany into NATO. Working together with the Germans in NATO has no doubt been valuable in many ways. I think, for one thing, that it has increased the likelihood that our friendship will endure, and in the event of an eventual breakdown of all efforts to obtain peace in Europe and between East and West, Germany's participation and partnership in NATO will greatly facilitate our combining of arms and joining forces again. However, Germany must be given a "rugged, armed neutral" status. Russia would have no further excuse in the eyes of the world to maintain the Red Army West of her own borders. Short of war, I think that our only realistic hope for honoring our

our

promises and our obligations to the Eastern European prison states lies in a guaranteed, adequately armed, "neutral" Germany.

The precise details of the eventual solution are not all-important, but we must be ready to offer an unallied Germany, and I think we would be wise to capture the initiative by suggesting such a plan at the earliest possible point. We should consult our good friends in Europe first, of course, and then arrive at a plan of action. What do the French and West German and British Foreign Ministers think? What do Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden believe? What does Spaak think? How about Robert Schumann? Has anyone asked the former Swedish Ambassador in Washington, Erik Bohoman, what his views are? There are many very wise and able statesmen to consult.

A plan such as that proposed by a group of neutral countries in Europe in the fall of '55 may be as good as any, beginning with the negotiations between the two Germanies. That plan has the advantage of proposing the adherance of a unified Germany to both the West and East European defense pacts without being included in the General Staffs of either. Germany would, in other words, be a sort of independent third force without being "neutral". Thus, Germany would be included in defense agreements but would not be a party to an "alliance".

All foreign troops would presumably be withdrawn to West and East German border areas for the period of the German "confederation" negotiations and perhaps for a trial period beyond that. All of our negotiations would of course press our position regarding

aerial inspection

aerial inspection in the hope that this important objective of ours could be realized.

There is no doubt that making Germany an independent force in the middle of Europe entails some risks. Russia has very much to offer Germany, both in connection with Germany's former Eastern territories and in connection with the industrialization of the Communist world from Poland to China. But risks have to be taken in all events. I say, let us gamble on Germany. After all, if Germany can expand her trade and ########## her industrial development activities Eastward, a certain amount of competitive pressure on the other European states will be relaxed. The world of trade will expand generally, and we will all participate in it and benefit from it. And if no accommodation is reached between Russia and the West, what are our prospects? War on, one hand, and an endless, dangerous and immensely costly state of tension on the other hand. The only hope for a reasonable co-existence in our times is through the solution of the German problem.

Only a dissolution of our alliance with West Germany can bring about German reunification. Only a dissolution of that alliance will make possible the withdrawal to Russia of the Red Army, and only then is there any hope for freeing the captive peoples throughout Eastern Europe.

It is all very well to admire the Hungarians and commiserate with all the captive peoples, but what are we going to do about it?

There is

There is something in this connection that we should not permit ourselves to forget, the memory of which should sting us into bold and determined action to relieve these peoples. But for our wartime policy and our postwar failures, these people would be free today. Big powers, like big men, have big responsibilities. Sticking pig-headedly to our "unconditional surrender" policy and then later disbanding our armies after the war in the face of certain danger vis-a-vis the Russians, caused untold mischief. We simply cannot sit tight in our present positions and wait for the inevitable explosion. We really helped cause all this and we must make hard decisions, take considerable risks, and do bold things in a determined effort to bring about Russia's withdrawal from the Satellite States. The damage will never be undone by our simply pointing the finger of guilt at the Russians, however true it of course is that Russia is the "villain." Russia's guilt is an established fact; now let us concentrate on practical steps to free the Eastern Europeans. That is in short our duty.

What we may lose in terms of absolute military security by the loss of Germany as an ally and as a military base we will more than make up in other ways. The importance of Russia's military withdrawal behind her own borders cannot be overestimated. Withdrawing our forces to France, Britain, and Spain hardly leaves us defenceless, in any event. Incidentally, agreed limitation of armament expenditures will in time make of Germany an example of the benefits which reasonable disarmaments could bring to all.

PETROV

January 15, 1969

Mr. Vladimir Petrov
Institute for Sino-Soviet Studies
George Washington University
Washington, D. C. 20006

Dear Mr. Petrov:

Thank you for your letter of January 8, and your short piece on Czechoslovakia. I read it with great interest.

Best regards,

Henry A. Kissinger

ack for
THAK

JAN 10 1969

Institute for Sino-Soviet Studies

January 8, 1969

Mr. Henry A. Kissinger
Office of the President-elect
450 Park Avenue, NYC.

Dear Mr. Kissinger:

Thank you for your note. From what I hear from Fritz Kraemer and a few other friends, you are living through a very difficult period; it may last another few months, I fear.

I have had a few prolonged conversations with Soviet officials and visiting Soviet "Americanologists" in recent weeks, and I have an overall impression that Moscow is thinking in terms of a "package deal" which might include a Vietnam settlement, an arrangement regarding the Middle East, the ratification of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (particularly by some of the present non-signers such as West Germany and Japan - they are not concerned so much about the United States), and the future of Washington-Peking relations which worries them more than they are willing to admit.

Enclosed please find a short piece I wrote a few months ago on one problem which I see as rather crucial; it came out only yesterday but is only moderately dated.

Sincerely,

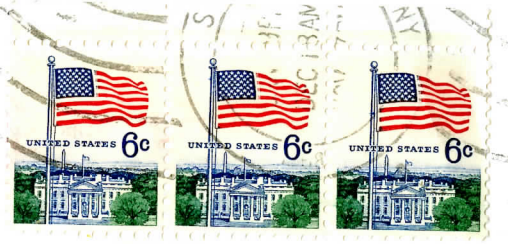
Vladimir Petrov

THE
GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY

Washington, D.C. 20006

LIFE
TIME & LIFE BUILDING
ROCKEFELLER CENTER
NEW YORK 10020

Gene Farmer
237 St. Marks Place
Staten Island, N.Y. 10301



Dr. Henry Kissinger

Office of the President-Elect

450 Park Avenue

New York, New York 10022

Czechoslovakia And The Experts' Myopia

by Vladimir Petrov

One of the curious things about the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia is that it caught by surprise practically all communist world-watchers. Newspaper correspondents in Prague, Moscow and other capitals, and staff experts on communist affairs in their government offices suffered acute professional embarrassment when the news about the appearance of Soviet tanks in the streets of Czechoslovak cities was announced over Radio Prague. From all evidence, Western intelligence services were also caught flat-footed. President Johnson reportedly learned about the invasion from none other than Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin. Even more distressing is that, judging by their expressions of "shock and dismay" in the interviews immediately following the events of August 21, most leading American Sovietologists on university campuses were equally unprepared for this development.

The failure of the CIA to anticipate the Soviet move is perhaps understandable. Although the Warsaw Pact troops had been massing along the Czechoslovak borders for some time, this action could conceivably have been interpreted as an instrument of political pressure; the Soviet field commanders themselves probably did not receive the signal to open a certain envelope with the orders to cross the border until shortly before the zero hour. But whatever the excuses to which the searchers for "hard evidence" might be entitled, such excuses do not absolve political analysts. The latter were not obligated to forecast the timing and the scope of the intervention, but they certainly could be expected to predict its probability on the basis of their knowledge of communist behavior and modes of operation, of the specific situation in Czechoslovakia, and of the Soviet reaction to the developments in Prague in the preceding months and weeks.

. . . inability of the observers to put themselves into the shoes (in this instance) of Soviet leaders and see things *their* way.

That they didn't poses a question of the general misperception on the part of so many Western observers of the communist world, their apparent inability to take adequate cognizance of relevant facts and draw from them rational conclusions. To a large extent, the fault lies with the excitable reporters on the scene, and it was admittedly difficult even for seasoned analysts to pinpoint what truly mattered in the flood of news from Eastern Europe. But it also ought to be admitted that many scholars — and government experts — had been emotionally inclined to accept the incredibly optimistic slant of the news at face value.

Misperception in critical situations is a very serious matter. As Ralph K. White, of the University, points out in his recent book *(Nobody Wanted War,* Doubleday, 1968*)* "misperception might explain how normally sane human beings can unwittingly, without intending the consequences, involve themselves step by step in actions that lead to war." And he shows how self-delusions and the inability to perceive the enemy's viewpoint were a major factor in the histories of wars.

American Sovietologists on university campuses were equally unprepared. . .

In the specific case of Czechoslovakia, the United States has not been a direct party to the conflict. While the Czechoslovaks have been regarded as "good guys" and the hardline Soviet leaders, together with their followers in Eastern Europe, as "bad guys," the emotional involvement of the American public has been relatively limited. The sad memory of Hungary in 1956, the craving for *détente* with Moscow, the growing isolationism in the country, and the spectaculars of the Presidential campaign all served to dilute public interest in the Czechoslovak crisis. However, precisely because of this relative detachment, our surprise at the Soviet move appears even more puzzling, carrying with it far-reaching and ominous implications. If objective political analysts cannot foresee such a cataclysm in a well-studied area, if trained and experienced news reporters cannot adequately detect major developments in the onrush of fast-breaking news, we must assume that something is inherently wrong with their overall approach to their task.

The answer, I submit, should be looked for in one of the forms of misperception analyzed by White, namely in the lack of empathy — the apparent inability of the observers to put themselves into the shoes (in this instance) of Soviet leaders and see things *their* way. To be sure, Soviet reasons for intervention had been spelled out numerous times in news reports, background articles, and in elaborate and intelligent discussions of the crisis by eminent authorities—

> the Soviet fear of the contagious effects of the Czechoslovak peaceful revolution, the expressions of distrust and poorly concealed hostility towards Moscow in the uncensored Czechoslovak press, the economic reforms and the penetration of Western private capital into Czechoslovakia, Prague's general rapprochement with West Germany, the growing independence of the reformist leadership and its reluctance to permit Warsaw Pact maneuvers on Czechoslovak territory, the "liberals" attacks on the "conservatives" and other pro-Soviet figures, the excitement of the youth and intelligentsia, the disclosures of the crimes of the Stalin era, and, of course, obnoxious to Moscow, the cheers from the West every time Czechoslovakia appeared to be moving further towards internal democratization and external independence.

At the same time, however, the prevailing feeling among political analysts (and, consequently, of the American public and the government) was that the Soviets had no choice but to bow to the forces of change and to adjust to the new situation, much as the U. S. does in analagous situations. To that end, the press, including the analyses of many reputable specialists, cited a multitude of reasons —

> the continuing Soviet preoccupation with the hostile Chinese and the resulting dependence of Moscow on the good will of "moderate" communist parties for the showdown with Peking scheduled for the fall, the psychological impossibility of repeating Hungary in the presumably relaxed atmosphere of the late 1960's, the general weakening of Moscow's grip on the communist regimes of Eastern Europe (underscored by neutralist tendencies in Yugoslavia and Rumania), the presumed need for the Soviets to keep open the channels of communication with the United States, thereby fostering dissent and disarray within the NATO alliance.

. . . remember the Suez campaign of 1956, the Bay of Pigs, or the overthrow of the Diem government in Saigon?

Some analysts even reasoned that the Soviets would abstain from anything drastic as their contribution to the "stop Nixon" campaign in the U. S. Considerable evidence exists that the White House itself entertained such hopes while secretly planning a Johnson-Kosygin summit meeting and praying for a breakthrough in the Paris peace talks.

Most of this speculation was very clever, very sophisticated, and to a large extent, plausible. I myself was convinced last spring that such considerations were present in the minds of the Soviet leaders. I expected them to take into account the fate of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the heavy burdens of the armaments race resulting from the increase of tension in international relations, the Soviet image abroad, and the reaction within the Soviet Union itself, particularly among the youth and the intellectuals.

At the same time I wondered about two unknowns in this complex equation. One was the never openly acknowledged, almost irrational fear of Germany — divided or reunited — rooted in the trauma of World War II. Another was an equally unspoken but doubtlessly cumulative effects of the defections in Eastern Europe from the Soviet fold. The revolts in East Germany in 1953 and in Poland and Hungary in 1956; the breakaways of Tito and Ceausescu; the angry assaults of the tiny and totally helpless Albania — all must have been deeply humiliating to the Kremlin leaders, perennially worrying over the specter of the falling dominoes. Having reconciled themselves to being unloved by their satellites, how far, I was asking myself, were they prepared to go in a display of self-restraint in dealing with Czechoslovakia? Would they follow the example of the United States? Or would they prove to be true to their own nature?

. . . the responsibility for Western inaction must be shared by political analysts. . .

Whatever optimism I had vanished when *Pravda* published (on July 18) the text of the joint Warsaw Pact nations' (Rumania and, of course, Czechoslovakia being absent) message to the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. The ultimatum sternly ordered Dubcek and his colleagues to put their house in order and asserted the right of the other communist states to intervene in the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia. This document, of such overriding importance, should have left no doubt as to the top priority Moscow attached to the Czechoslovak crisis. From then on, it was only a question of whether the Czechoslovaks themselves could carry out the terms of the ultimatum and, perhaps, of what position the United States would take. In retrospect, it also appears clear, judging by the remarkable efficiency of the invasion, that military contingency plans of the Soviet command were also approved about that time — if not earlier.

To my knowledge very few Russia-watchers recognized the threat and sounded the alarm. (Victor Zorza of the *Manchester Guardian* was an exception.) To others, the events of August 21 fell like a bolt out of the blue. As the military occupation became an accomplished fact, expressions of "shock and dismay" were heard everywhere. Even at this late date, some analysts refuse to admit their failure, insisting quite irrelevantly that the Soviets had acted against their own best interests, that they would be forced to withdraw before too long under all kinds of pressure, that it was Moscow's leaders who misperceived and miscalculated.

Admittedly, to predict the Soviet move was no easy task. In reaching a decision involving multiple and complex considerations, the Soviet leaders themselves were probably far from unanimous, and throughout they showed signs of hesitation and uncertainty. Yet the choice had nar-

rowed down to a simple choice — intervene or not intervene, for from Moscow's point of view the situation in Czechoslovakia was rapidly nearing the point of no return, with the Prague authorities helplessly floundering and clearly incapable of stemming the tide. Our political analysts first erred in underestimating the capacity of the Soviets to act decisively, probably because this capacity is such a scarce commodity in democratic societies. Their second error was in attributing to the Soviet leadership our own scale of values, which was plainly an exercise in wishful thinking. The third was a characteristic presumption of so many experts in international affairs: that of knowing what is good and what is bad for a given foreign nation, and a corresponding (but historically insupportable) assumption that "civilized" governments normally act in their own best interests as such are defined by detached and dispassionate scholars. This is often not true even in democratic societies where big issues are freely discussed — remember the Bay of Pigs, the Suez campaign of 1956, or the overthrow of the Diem government in Saigon? It is much less true in the communist world.

Finally, there was an error — quite widespread among liberal Sovietologists — in assuming that there exists, basically, the same logic and the same way of reasoning among all modern leaders and that, perhaps with minor variations — attributable to prejudices, ideology, upbringing, or insufficient sophistication — all leaders behave more or less the same way. The impressive Soviet record indicating certain substantial differences between the communist and, say, American behavior, was consciously or subconsciously dismissed. Aren't we all changing, becoming more enlightened and subtle in exercising power and self-restraint, and in taking into account the enormous complexities of the modern world?

Of course, alarming signs during the last few years came from within the Soviet Union suggesting a withering away of the "liberalism" of the immediate post-Stalin era. But those had been regarded as purely internal developments, not necessarily transferable to the international arena where the Soviets appeared to be aligned

Even at this late date, political analysts refuse to admit their failure. . .

with "moderate" communists. Whatever the toughening of Soviet international behavior, many assumed that it could be explained by the strains of the Vietnam War: didn't we ourselves deviate from the "norm" in *our* behavior because of the same war? The temptation to attribute to alien political systems our own views, judgments, and concerns seems to be irresistible to a great many otherwise knowledgeable experts.

In the end, the watchers of the Czechoslovak crisis had lost sight of the perception of events from the perspective of the Kremlin. The Warsaw ultimatum was either played down or dismissed altogether by Western analysts. The Soviet-Czechoslovak encounters at Cierna and Bratislava, with the unprecedented attendance of the full membership of the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, as well as the initial withdrawal of the Warsaw Pact troops from the maneuvers in Czechoslovakia, were interpreted as signs of Soviet weakness or rationality. The Czechoslovaks, on the other hand, supported by the vast majority of the world's communist parties, appeared to display cool defiance and determination to defend their newly won freedoms. Under such circumstances most analysts thought Moscow would avoid military occupation, even if it could be certain the West would take no action. Events proved them wrong, and the appearance of half a million Soviet troops in the heart of Europe, in a country that had never been occupied before, has upset the strategic balance of power in Europe no less than the placing of Soviet missiles in Cuba upset the balance in the Western Hemisphere in October, 1962. The significance of this drastic change is still given scant notice in the American press, although it has been fully realized in Europe and, somewhat belatedly, by the United States Government.

Whether or not the invasion could have been thwarted is now a matter for speculation.

Whether or not the invasion could have been thwarted is now a matter for speculation. I personally believe that a strong warning from the White House *before* the event, noting that such a move would invalidate the Kennedy-Khrushchev understanding following the Cuban missile crisis, might prevent the ratification of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, could endanger cultural and trade relations and would compel the United States to transfer additional troops to West Germany, would have, at the very least, made the Soviets pause to guess what the next American move might be. As in 1956, anti-Soviet feelings in Eastern Europe are running high, making any kind of military confrontation with the West unthinkable to the Soviets in view of their extended and vulnerable communications across the countries with deeply divided populations.

Alternatively, it is also possible that the United States could have extracted, in return for a hands-off stand regarding Czechoslovakia, concessions on some other outstanding issues: in the form of a cease-fire in Vietnam, a tolerable agreement on the Middle East, or a return of the Pueblo crew.

But in order to take a firm stand, the American government and public needed a much clearer picture of what was going on, and an authoritative forewarning about the likelihood of Soviet action. To the extent that neither was forthcoming, the responsibility for Western inaction must be shared by political analysts, within and outside the government, who had misread the mind of the Soviets and grossly exaggerated the Czechoslovak ability to resist, thereby helping to create a climate in which no action was possible.

There is no assurance the United States would have acted even had the climate been different and the advice been sound. But this is an entirely different matter. For the moment, we will do well to examine our embarrassing lack of empathy in this particular episode, keeping in mind that the next time around American interests may be involved much more directly and that our failure to perceive through the eyes of the adversary may have much more dangerous consequences.

The Apotheosis and Descent of Chairman Mao

by James T. Myers

"Dear as our mother and father to us are, Chairman Mao is dearer by far." Thus do the school children of the Chinese People's Republic eulogize their nation's leader. In China today Mao Tse-tung is lauded as the Great Helmsman of the Chinese revolution, the Great Leader, Great Teacher, and Great Supreme Commander of the Chinese people. He is said to be the Red Sun in the hearts of his countrymen, is frequently compared to the life-giving forces of nature, and it is claimed, his "thought" is for all faithful Chinese the "soul of their being." The Chinese scientists who successfully synthesized protein insulin, as well as the atomic scientists who detonated China's first nuclear device are said to have reached the pinnacle of success only after drawing inspiration from the writings and thought of Mao Tse-tung. These scientists may have been relying on the following bit of wisdom from the little red book's chapter on "Investigation and Study":

"Investigation may be likened to the long months of pregnancy, and solving a problem to the day of birth. To investigate a problem is, indeed, to solve it."

Mao's thought is not relevant only to men of science. He is the recognized authority on every other subject — from ping-pong to night soil collection. Mao's physical presence is reputed to have inspired senior

FARMER

Eastern Europe

December 31, 1968

Mr. Gene Farmer
Senior Editor
Life Magazine
Time and Life Building
Rockefeller Center
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Farmer:

I very much appreciated your letter of December 17, and its many thoughtful comments on the situation in Eastern Europe. It is one of the best reviews of what is going on in that area that I have seen for some time.

Please keep writing me. This is the sort of fresh thinking government produces too rarely.

Sincerely,

Henry A. Kissinger

12/20

LIFE

TIME & LIFE BUILDING
ROCKEFELLER CENTER
NEW YORK 10020

EDITORIAL OFFICES
(212) JU 6-1212

17 December 1968

Dear Dr. Kissinger:

Thank you for your kind note of 9 December. I should have responded earlier but for the fact that my entire household has been struck down by whatever it is that has put half the city under the care of doctors, who seem to know little more about Hong Kong flu than I do.

During my recent trip I made no attempt to do the whole Iron Curtain bit; I picked Yugoslavia and Rumania because I thought the element of fear and/or nervousness made it likely that in those two countries people would talk to me. I did not attempt to see Tito or Ceaucescu; I have acquired a personal distrust for the gimmick of journalistic summitry, and I thought Sulzberger's column, written after he saw Ceaucescu, was misleading. Anyway, for what they are worth, here are the impressions I brought back.

The period of genuine fear lasted from the time of the Czech takeover until about the end of September. The Yugoslavs oiled their guns, called up some reserves and made all sorts of contingency plans for a quick withdrawal into the hills should the Red Army start pouring down across the Hungarian border. (They would not fight the Russians in the open field, of course.) The Rumanians called up some workers' militia, a kind of local National Guard. Ceaucescu has denied that these men were given arms, but the prevailing opinion is that at least some of them were. And De Gaulle remarked that for the first time since he had returned to power in 1958 he now had to take into account the possibility of war in Europe. I heard this as a rumor when I passed through Paris at the start of my trip; I didn't quite believe it, since this was tantamount to admitting that the General's whole "eastward" policy had been fatally compromised. But the British Embassy in Belgrade confirmed it; the remark had been made in Paris to the British Ambassador.

In Yugoslavia the guns are still oiled, but there has been some relaxation of tension. In early September emissaries from the Soviet and Bulgarian Embassies were charging around Belgrade, buttonholing intellectuals in general and journalists in particular to warn them they were being watched and that there was "a little list." Marko Nikezic, the foreign minister, says this personal intimidation has stopped, but at the time I was there Yugoslavia was still being blasted in the Soviet press. In any event the climate was still such

LIFE
TIME & LIFE BUILDING
ROCKEFELLER CENTER
NEW YORK 10020

EDITORIAL OFFICES
(212) JU 6-1212

that a rumor could get out of hand the last night I was in Belgrade (5 November): the Russians were supposed to have invaded Rumania. This got people at the Hotel Metropol bar ordering doubles instead of singles, and--I heard later--thoroughly upset a party at the Italian Embassy. I don't think a line was ever filed on the rumor, because I checked the Associated Press that night by telephone and was informed that the talk was indeed all over the town but no confirmation had surfaced. The next morning I told Nikezic about it; he seemed genuinely surprised. Then he guessed that the rumor had started because of a shipment of Soviet military aircraft to the Rumanian Air Force which Nikezic had heard about over the weekend. This must have been the case, since the following day I was told by the Rumanian Foreign Office in Bucharest that the planes had been delivered, that the ferry pilots were Russian, and the planes were 30 in number. The Rumanians also insisted that the planes were now Rumanian property. I don't know how literally to take that, of course.

The big thing on Yugoslav minds is the Middle East and the "confrontation" possibilities which lie in that area. They are very bothered about the presence of a Soviet fleet in the Adriatic and the Mediterranean, and when they look at a map they see that the land road to the Mediterranean runs right through their front parlor. I tried to argue this point with Nikezic, suggesting that Russia's new status as a first-rate salt-water power made it unnecessary for the Red Army to overextend itself on land. He shot me down. "I see your point," he said, "but it is not valid. The Russians are not accustomed to scattering fleets all over the world and using them as instruments of power, the way the British did for so long. We think we know their military thinking very well, and they still want everything land-connected." Since Nikezic appears to be the only one in Belgrade who thought to the last that the Soviets would invade Czechoslovakia (Tito figured the danger was past), perhaps his opinion should be taken seriously.

There is no ideological clutter in such thinking; the Yugoslavs threw their ideological Bible away some time ago. But there is a renewed consciousness of Great Russian imperialism in the manner of Cathering the Great, who also sent a Russian fleet to the Mediterranean. I found, not surprisingly, that both Nikezic and Micunavic, who used to be Ambassador to Washington, had some fairly raw nerves on the subject of "the Socialist Commonwealth." (I had lost track of Micunavic, but he heard that I was in town and sent for me; he is now the local equivalent

LIFE
TIME & LIFE BUILDING
ROCKEFELLER CENTER
NEW YORK 10020

EDITORIAL OFFICES
(212) JU 6-1212

of Senator Fulbright at the parliamentary level.) Both men said in effect: Who, me? "We consider ourselves a Socialist country," Nikezic said, "but we are not in anybody's Commonwealth."

There is a good deal of talk in Belgrade to the effect that Nikezic is marked for bigger things, starting with the presidency of the Serbian Communist Party. I couldn't get a line on who his successor might be, but I wouldn't be surprised if it were Micunavic. Ambassador Elbrick's thoughts on that subject would be worth more than mine; he had the flu when I was there and I didn't see him. This shift could even put Nikezic in line for the succession when Tito goes, but I think it worthwhile to bear in mind something Koca Popovic told me two years ago: There is only one Tito, there won't be another, and in any successor government the power will be spread around differently. At the time Popovic was vice-president of Yugoslavia, but he is now old and ailing and is out of it.

Meanwhile it would appear that Yugoslavia continues to move more and more in the direction of an "open society," whether they call it Socialist or not; speech and press are relatively free, and a traveler has no feeling of being in a police state. As you know, no visa is required to enter or leave Yugoslavia. The abolition of the entrance visa requirement (all this took place two years ago) encourages tourism, and the abolition of the exit visa requirement for Yugoslav nationals made their labor force mobile; this cut out the paper work. They do have an unemployment problem because their industrialization is undercapitalized; there just aren't enough jobs. But it is still an odd form of Communism which permits you to sign for your whole hotel bill on an American Express card. For that matter, even the Plaza Athenee in Bucharest will honor a Diners card.

Rumania is still a tight shop; the country seems to me to be run by a bunch of anti-Soviet Stalinists. There is also more nervousness in Bucharest (what a drab city, particularly in an autumn rain!) than Ceaucescu admitted in his conversation with Sulzberger. My principal source here was a deputy foreign minister named Malitza; he confirmed that the militia had been called up after the Czech takeover, and he certainly indicated that they had been armed with something more than their fists.

LIFE
TIME & LIFE BUILDING
ROCKEFELLER CENTER
NEW YORK 10020

EDITORIAL OFFICES
(212) JU 6-1212

When I was there the Rumanians were playing their relations with the Soviet Union very, very carefully. Ceaucescu made a dramatic speech denouncing the Czech invasion the week it happened; but according to American intelligence the Soviet Ambassador paid Ceaucescu a sudden visit the following Sunday morning. For whatever reason, criticism thereafter was muted. But the Rumanians have a clever way of considering that, a thing having been said once, that's enough: they can point to something on the record and say, "That's our policy, that's all there is to it." Malitza had no illusions about the duress under which Dubcek & Co. signed the "normalization" agreement with the Soviets, but he took the stand that it was a legal document, and he said that privately the Rumanians were encouraging the Czechs to abide by it--that is, "be good." A document signed under such duress wouldn't stand up in a Western court, but this is Rumania and the Rumanians want no more trouble. They know how much mud they have thrown in Moscow's eyes in the past--more than the Czechs ever did.

I would guess that Ceaucescu would resist Warsaw Pact maneuvers in Rumania next spring, but not to the bitter end. If he did that, he would go the way of Dubcek, and his Army would face three awkward choices: 1) a hopeless all-out resistence; 2) the humiliation of submission; 3) running Westward for the Yugoslav hills. (The Yugoslavs give the impression of having allowed for the third possibility in their contingency planning, although they consider it a remote possibility.) Meanwhile economic relations between Rumania and the U.S.S.R. seem a little cloudy. A new trade treaty, to replace the one which expired at the beginning of 1968, has been initialed (according to Malitza), but it remains uncertain whether heavy equipment for two new power plants will be delivered as promised a long time ago. Although the Rumanians make a good deal of foreign currency by selling petroleum products, wheat and maize (particularly to West Germany), they are still vulnerable to economic as well as military pressures from Moscow.

Malitza had one comment on "war danger" which I found interesting. It went about like this: "You Americans go from one extreme to the other. All during the 1950s there was talk about 'war by accident' and 'war by miscalculation.' After the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 one heard less such talk, and after the test-ban treaty

LIFE
TIME & LIFE BUILDING
ROCKEFELLER CENTER
NEW YORK 10020

EDITORIAL OFFICES
(212) JU 6-1212

was signed in 1963 the talk died out entirely. You assumed that more had been settled with the Soviet Union than was the case. There always was some danger of war, and there is now."

One reason I undertook this trip was to find out where so many people, including myself, had gone wrong in judging the danger of military action against Czechoslovakia to be past by mid-August. (I would have been much less surprised had it happened in June.) Of course de Gaulle and Tito were wrong too, but I was surprised to learn how early Tito had been cut in on the possibility of such an operation. This may not be news to you, but it was news to me that when he passed through Moscow, on his way home from the Far East during the last week of April, the Soviet leaders told him they were very worried about what Dubcek was doing, that military intervention was being considered, and what did Tito think about it? Tito was completely taken aback; he said it would be "a catastrophe." According to one man who was there(Nikezic), "They didn't react at all. They just sat there." Obviously the Soviets were not seeking Tito's advice; they were just testing his reaction. Finally, after stating his opinion that what the Czechs were doing did not constitute a danger to the Socialist system, Tito said he would work on the Czechs, and he did. He thought he had worked successfully; there was a political council of war in Belgrade three or four days before the Red Army marched, and Nikezic seems to have been the only holdout vote.

It would be easy and a little dangerous to over-emphasize the role of the Soviet military in the final decision; the Yugoslavs think that even Grechko may have been against invading Czechoslovakia, although they think the Red Army's political commissariat types were probably for it. (I am inclined to agree on the basis of the evidence in so far.) Both the Romanians and the Yugoslavs agree that Ulbricht and Gomulka, who had their own job security to worry about, were yelling their heads off to Moscow during the late winter and early spring, although there is no concensus on how much influence their yelling had; Malitza seems to think it counted for quite a lot. Then there is the traditional Russian fear of Germany; military habits die hard, particularly in the case of a land animal like the Soviet Union, and I suppose the Soviet generals still tend to think of the Bohemian hills the way Bismarck did.

My own view is that the Soviets moved out of panic when they

LIFE
TIME & LIFE BUILDING
ROCKEFELLER CENTER
NEW YORK 10020

EDITORIAL OFFICES
(212) JU 6-1212

saw, or thought they saw, the dismantling of a Socialist state in an intolerable place. Czechoslovakia's geography has been one of the curses of that country, and its location invokes, in the Russian mind, the old fear of Germany, some of which they fake for their own purposes but some of which I think is real. I think, however, that the fear is more psychological than military. The Soviet generals can't really be afraid of the mighty Bundeswehr, which has never been up to strength anyway. But Nikezic thinks the Russians were genuinely frightened of the economic consequences of a Czech getaway, particularly if West German banks started ponying up big credits. After all, even after the Communist takeover in 1948 the Czechs had to be slapped down when they wanted to come into the Marshall Plan.

I put the gist of this syllogism to Wilfred Burchett, the Australian journalist whose Communist connections you know. He professed to be shaken by what the Russians did ("Outraged? Let's say I was very upset"). His reaction: "That's about it, but you forgot two things. Even the pro-Dubcek Czechs now tell me that Dubcek was not as strong a man as they had thought, which indicates to me that the reforms may really have been getting away from him to a degree that the Russians could not tolerate. Also, the Czechs are Slavs and the Russians think of them as family. They think of the Rumanians as a bunch of romantic and harmless Latins." (And, of course, there was no "media nonsense" in Rumania.)

I might add that I take Burchett seriously within his known limits; it is in his interest to tell the truth, even if it is not the whole truth. He has a nice racket shuttling back and forth between Hanoi and Paris with merchandise nobody else can get, and this makes him about $20,000 a year. Therefore he would be foolish to tell too many outright lies. Moreover he said one thing in this conversation, which took place in Paris, that I thought damned odd, to wit: "The big problem of the Socialist states is to find the means for official dissent and then learn to tolerate the dissent. If they don't solve that one, I don't know whether the system will survive." A couple of weeks later he was in New York (he got a visa in Montreal on a Cuban passport). I saw him for a drink and asked him if I had heard him correctly; I had.

All this leaves unanswered two questions:

1. Why did the Soviets stop short of turning Prague into another Budapest? Even allowing for the fact that the Czechs

LIFE
TIME & LIFE BUILDING
ROCKEFELLER CENTER
NEW YORK 10020

EDITORIAL OFFICES
(212) JU 6-1212

did not fight like Hungarian Freedom Fighters, it still seemed inconceivable at the end of August that Dubcek and his associates would be around, even in positions of nominal power, at the beginning of December. I deduce that the Soviets realized they had made a considerable political miscalculation and therefore rewrote the script as they went along. Although it appears that Dubcek was roughed up physically when he was taken to Moscow, the Soviets didn't shoot him and probably won't. They were even "negotiating" with him in the first week of December, although the presence at that meeting (in Kiev) of Shelest, the Ukrainian party boss, may have been significant. The Yugoslavs think he was the biggest hawk of all on the Czech matter.

2. Was the Czech takeover a 100% politically defensive measure? If so it's too bad about the Czechs, who are a historically unlucky people, but the military power balance has not been critically deranged and that does not mean we are in imminent danger of war. Or was the military operation designed in part to shore up the Czech-German border with Soviet troops with something else in mind? That old German word drang is back in conversation--Great Russian drang, that is. Micunavic says, "If there is drang in this, it is drang to the South, and that means us." On this question I have heard "I don't know" in half a dozen languages, including the Romanian and the Australian.

My guess is that we are entering a period of "gelatinous" cold war, neither all hard nor all soft, with all hands playing it safe, taking no wooden nickels and--to a degree, anyway--going back to the dreary practice of reading tea leaves. Like a lot of other people, I had hoped we were about out of that period; but considering the Russian mentality, which was pretty secretive even in the days of the Czars, maybe we will never be out of it entirely. Janos Radvanyi, the defected Hungarian who is now at Stanford, once told me he had seen documentary proof (in Budapest files) of a first-rate row in early 1967 which nearly cost Kosygin and Brezhnev their jobs. I suspect that that sort of thing happens more frequently than we can know.

During the first week of November the Yugoslavs were nervous not only because of a late and spectacularly warm Indian summer (this looked like good tank weather) but because of a dawning fear that the U.S. might fail to elect anyone President. I walked a Yugoslav editor (Julius, of Politika) through the jungle of the 12th Amendment one morning and he literally began to turn pale. When I had finished he went to the cupboard

LIFE
TIME & LIFE BUILDING
ROCKEFELLER CENTER
NEW YORK 10020

EDITORIAL OFFICES
(212) JU 6-1212

and brought out a bottle of what he called "the good slivovitz"; he thought we both needed one.

I was in Bucharest the day following the U.S. election, and I spent most of that day at the American Embassy trying to keep score. I broke at 1 p.m., Bucharest time, to visit the Foreign Office and present my journalistic credentials. I was mildly surprised to find the Press Section openly pulling for Nixon; at that time, of course, the result was not yet known. My conversation with Malitza turned up the reasons why: 1) Nixon apparently got on well with Ceaucescu and the Rumanians liked him rather than otherwise ("He asked a lot of questions and he listened to the answers"); 2) Humphrey was in Johnson's shadow and, like the Yugoslavs, the Rumanians liked the idea of a change; 3) things being how they are, the Rumanians are not at all unhappy about a U.S. President who is definitely not pro-Soviet.

I think that ends it, and it's about time, since this letter is too long already. If any of this is remotely useful to you, I shall be glad.

With respect, and every good personal wish as always.

Sincerely,

Gene Farmer

Gene Farmer
Senior Editor
(as from: 237 St. Marks Place
Staten Island, New York
10301)

Dr. Henry Kissinger
Office of the President-elect
450 Park Avenue
New York, New York 10022