

226. 1986

Oct 86

## GRAPPLING WITH THE BEAR

### A Strategy for Dealing with Moscow

SENATOR BOB DOLE

Despite the Daniloff case, 1986 may be a watershed year in U.S.-Soviet relations. We appear to be on track for a second Reagan-Gorbachev summit and to be engaged in the first truly serious nuclear arms control negotiations we have had with the Russians since the early 1970s. Simultaneously, a second level of political contacts continues on a whole range of regional issues—Afghanistan and Kampuchea among the most prominent—and we are actively exploring new prospects for trade, especially in the agricultural field. In sum, we are dealing with the Soviets at all levels and on a wide range of subjects. So far, the concrete results have been scanty. But there is reason to hope.

As always, it is difficult to know exactly what game the Soviets might be playing. But that very uncertainty makes it all the more important that we take a new, hardheaded look at our overall strategy for dealing with the Russians; at how we can best shape and respond to the way the situation evolves; and at how we can take advantage of all opportunities to advance our interests, while keeping a firm watch on our flanks, to make sure we don't give or bargain away anything important to our national interest.

In the paragraphs below, I want to suggest some general principles for dealing successfully with the Russians, and I want to relate these principles to the real world issues with which the President, the Congress, and the American people will be grappling in the months ahead.

#### The Myth of Detente

In making a judgment on whether and how to deal with the Soviets, we must start by keeping two related facts clearly in mind. First, the U.S.S.R. is fundamentally different from the United States, in system, in goals, in values. The Daniloff case proves that once again. And, second, some of these differences are so profound they are never going to disappear or be negotiable.

Ronald Reagan termed the Soviet Union an "evil empire," and for that expression he was pilloried. And yet, to cite but one example, there is no dispute that the Russians have invaded and occupied Afghanistan, an independent country—surely the classic definition of an empire; and that in Afghanistan they engage in horrible tactics (the use

of toy bombs to kill and dismember children is a case in point) to achieve their political goals—tactics which can reasonably be described as evil.

Time and talk are not going to turn the Soviet Union into a liberal democracy or lead it to drop its global imperialist aims. If we conduct our relations with Moscow believing such miracles can happen, then we are doomed to disappointment and, probably, are ripe to be taken to the cleaners.

If we pursue our general relations with the Soviets, and our general affairs in the world, in the illusion that some day we can bridge the vast differences that exist and achieve some fundamental common ground—that our competition with Moscow will end; that there really will be "detente"—then we are in deep, deep trouble.

In fact, detente is a dangerous myth, based upon a phony premise: that there is more to our relations with the Soviets than a sum of parts; that if we cooperate with Moscow in enough ways and spheres, we will create an atmosphere of goodwill that will be self-generating—that is, the Soviets will begin to make concessions not for some specific *quid pro quo* but to preserve a constructive ambience.

The danger of worshipping the false god of detente is twofold. Belief in detente breeds unrealistic expectations, which invariably lead to shattering disappointment. More important, the illusion that detente is real and valuable in its own right leads to self-imposed pressure for unilateral concessions, to keep the spirit of detente alive. Only if we can put the idea of detente behind us, once and for all, will we have a realistic chance to accomplish what we want with the Soviets.

#### Challenging the Russians

And there is a flip side to this coin—our paranoid fear of defending our own interests or of challenging the Soviets, even where their activities are unwarranted and indefensible and where they are vulnerable, just because we might somehow sour our overall bilateral relations.

In fact, the opposite is true—when we stand up to Moscow, or keep it on the defensive, we will reduce its long-

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term aggressiveness and often even find a more willing and flexible negotiating partner. We have rights and interests, too, and when Moscow clearly understands our determination to defend those rights and pursue those interests, the world will be a safer, not a more dangerous, place. That is the lesson of, for example, the Cuban missile crisis and of our determined pursuit of a militarily stronger America.

Nor are the Russians supermen. Not only can we challenge them; we can challenge them *successfully*. And we can do so without automatically pushing them to the brink

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of a violent, armed response. The keys are: (1) moving where we have the advantage and can bring the most effective power to bear; and (2) avoiding direct assaults on fundamental Soviet interests—such as the survival of the Soviet state—which might engender a massive, violent response.

Let me cite one example. While the Russians have ambitious plans in southern Africa, the vital interests of the Soviet state are not engaged. Moscow will likely defend its interests vigorously. But it is not going to launch an attack on the United States, or break off all contacts with us, because we pursue our own interests there aggressively.

Make no mistake about it—we do have interests in that region that are just as important, and certainly more legitimate, than the Kremlin's. And we have just as much right as Gorbachev and his cronies to pursue and defend our interests—in Angola, through strong support for Jonas Savimbi's freedom fighters; in Mozambique, by refusing to provide aid and comfort to the Marxist government, at least until it clearly and definitively turns away from Moscow; and in South Africa, by making clear that while we are determined to see an end to apartheid, we also find the African National Congress's Communist links and violent tactics abhorrent and inimical to the real interests of black South Africans.

#### A Big Stick

But it is not enough to be assertive. We also must be able to back up what we say to Moscow with real strength, or we're just not going to get anywhere. Building up our strength—and I'm speaking primarily of our military strength but also of our political and economic strength—is not a substitute for, or a rejection of, constructive bilateral

relations with the Russians. On the contrary, it is an essential prerequisite for any successful dealings with the Kremlin.

When Ronald Reagan submitted his first, ambitious defense budgets, the hue and cry was intense. Those budgets, we were told, would set off a new arms race which we would likely lose; would doom any prospects for arms control negotiations; and would usher in a new Cold War.

The opposite, of course, has happened. While the Soviets continue to spend heavily on military development—and, let's face it, that's something they will continue to do, no matter what—there has been no new destabilizing arms race. Thanks to the MX, the B-1, and other promising research and development projects, we have closed the military gap. The Soviets did come back to the Geneva talks, and they now appear to have made the first serious proposal they have offered in a decade and a half. And, as already noted, the final details are being nailed down for another summit.

In fact, we are where we are, not in spite of, but because of, our military buildup. The Kremlin leadership has understood, and I believe in a curious way respected, the Reagan military strategy far better than the liberal American media. They have understood, though presumably not appreciated, that a strong America deprives them of their preferred tactic—getting what they want through blackmail and intimidation—and forces them to choose between only two options: (1) dangerous confrontation with a potent foe, or (2) accommodation. Happily, they appear to be resigned for the time being to the latter.

The corollary, of course, is that they will continue to pursue this course only so long as we make it the only attractive one. If we in Congress, through draconian defense budget cuts, forfeit what the President has achieved in military capability and readiness since 1980, we will compromise any prospects for successful talks with Moscow. If we refuse further development of the MX, emasculate strategic defense (SDI), cap B-1 production, scrap the 600-ship Navy, and do all the other things that many are advocating, we will be sending the President into the poker game of the next summit with all his cards showing and not one so much as a face card.

#### Setting the Agenda

Another vital element in dealing successfully with the Soviets is to ensure that *our* agenda, rather than theirs, is on the table when we do deal. The Soviets still view us with pretty much the same mindset they've always had—what's theirs is theirs; what's ours is negotiable. It's time we relegated that concept to the trash can.

Pursuing our own concerns aggressively, of course, is going to set off a new round of handwringing among our faint of heart—we have to be careful; we can't offend the Soviets; if we push too hard, they won't deal. Hogwash!

The experience we've had on SDI is instructive. When confronted with a program or an idea they don't like, such as SDI, the Kremlin's automatic reaction—one reinforced by years of Western concessions—is to refuse even to discuss it. But if we are tough enough, and if we have the means—carrot or stick (and SDI could be both)—to make Moscow realize the practical need for talks, then talks will

ensue, despite the propaganda, despite the rhetoric.

In the final analysis, the Russians will deal when one or both of two conditions prevail—when there is something in it for them to gain, or when they stand to lose by not dealing. Our goal should be to create an agenda which forces them to deal with our issues, and as much as possible, on our terms.

Of course, not every issue fits every forum. But every important issue deserves, and demands, some forum. Nothing important to us is "too sensitive" to raise with Gorbachev or any other Soviet leader, no matter how embarrassing it may be to them. And nothing in Soviet history suggests they will be angered, or embarrassed, or of further talks if they see those talks as in their interest or if they see the breakdown of such talks as unduly costly.

The list of subjects we should pursue more vigorously is long. One key issue is Soviet violations of existing arms control agreements. That subject must remain on the front burner, in both substantive and propaganda terms. We should never let the world forget Moscow's sorry record of violations and non-compliance. And we should sign *no* new arms control agreements, period, unless the Soviets have done two things: (1) satisfactorily responded to our concerns on existing violations; and (2) agreed to effective means of verification.

Another central issue is Soviet human rights violations, both in foreign countries such as Afghanistan, and at home. We can never close our eyes to Soviet genocide in Afghanistan or imprisonment of dissidents at home. Despite Soviet efforts to make the next summit a one-issue (arms control) meeting, we must use a summit or any such meeting to keep the pressure on the Kremlin for its inhuman human rights record.

#### Some Common Interests

I should also note here, too, that—despite the many things that do divide us—there are some issues which both sides have on their agendas which could be the subject of non-hostile, perhaps even cooperative, dealings. Because the Soviets are, essentially, our enemies, does not mean we have no interests in common.

One issue that comes immediately to mind is nuclear non-proliferation. Neither of us has any long-term interests in seeing the spread of weapons-relevant technology and weapons-grade material to the developing world. Both of us, though—to win the political favor of friends or allies, for commercial gain, or because of our fears of the other—do less than we could and should to stop this spread. Engaging the Soviets in an aggressive non-proliferation program ought to be one of the highest priorities of our arms control talks, not just a small sideshow.

#### Risks and Returns

In sum, then, it is in our interest to deal with the Russians whenever: (1) they will engage us on the issues on our agenda, and (2) there is some reason to believe they may be prepared to deal in good faith.

But before we actually deal, there is one additional and critical thing we need to do: decide on our own goals and work out a realistic strategy for accomplishing them. It sounds easy, but it's something at which we've been woefully

ineffective.

Too often we have approached our relations with the Soviets as a reactive, damage-limiting exercise. We wait for the Russians to act, or for a crisis to emerge, and then we rush into the breach with a stop-gap response—using whatever means is most convenient at hand—with little regard for how our response will fit into our broader relations with the Soviets or our broader interests in the world.

The grain embargo of the Soviet Union is probably the

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classic example—since we got no cooperation from our allies and friends, it had *no* impact on Soviet policies in Afghanistan or on the economic well-being of the Soviet homeland. It merely cut us out of a market which yielded far more national benefit to us as grain sellers than to the Soviets as grain buyers.

We need to start our search for the right goals and strategy by refocusing on some of the fundamental questions in U.S.-Soviet relations. We needn't necessarily announce to the world how we really feel about these questions. But we certainly need to know in our own minds how we do. And, right now, I'm not sure that we do.

I would cite two issues in particular that our policy makers must address more comprehensively and decisively.

#### Our Strategic Posture Toward the U.S.S.R.

First, where do we need to be or—perhaps more precisely—where can we realistically aspire to be, *vis a vis* the Soviet Union in strategic military terms? Do we need to be superior in all major categories of weapons? Superior overall but willing to tolerate some areas of equity or even relative weakness? In rough parity, both overall and system-by-system? Or even inferior overall, but with enough retaliatory punch to deter strategic attack?

And, in fact, we need to address more concretely what superiority and parity actually mean. We need to decide to what degree technological superiority can offset numerical superiority (e.g., in strategic missile systems) and adjust our plans—and our negotiating positions—accordingly.

We also need to keep firmly in mind the idea that our strategic posture is a very dynamic concept. What we decide today impacts not only on our immediate position

relative to the Soviets but where we can be a decade or more down the road.

SDI is the prime case in point. While it may turn out to make sense to trade off SDI deployment over the next seven to 10 years for some immediate concessions on Soviet weapons levels, let's be sure we examine that proposition meticulously before striking any deal. On an issue of such fundamental importance as SDI, it is far more important than any agreement we sign be sound than soon.

Once we address these basic issues of strategic doctrine, a working strategy for achieving the goals we set flows more naturally—and, equally important, becomes more compelling politically. My own view, for example, is that we must have significant technological superiority over the Soviets in both nuclear and conventional weaponry (though not necessarily in every individual weapons system) to offset Soviet superiority in numbers of weapons and military personnel. We also need to maintain the technological initiative, so that we can nudge military R&D into the areas where we have the relative advantage. That, in fact, is one of the strongest arguments for SDI.

By starting with these kind of clear-cut assumptions and goals, it becomes much easier to decide which weapons systems need aggressive development and which can be given lower priority. Equally important, it should be much easier to sell a cynical and too often partisan Congress on a program—be it SDI or MX or whatever—that fits these clear criteria of where we need to be in national defense.

#### Should We Trade with the U.S.S.R.?

The other fundamental issue we need to reexamine is the nature of our economic relations with the Soviets. We all would agree, I think, that we must do everything we can to deny the Soviets access to national security-related high technology. But even with that stipulation, the remaining range of policy choices is wide. We could terminate all economic ties with the U.S.S.R., on the grounds that such relations only strengthen a state which has made itself our implacable enemy. We could try to limit our economic relations to those areas where the direct benefit we derive is clearly greater than the advantage accruing to the Soviets (though the Soviets are not likely to be willing to play that kind of game for very long). A third option would be to view and treat trade and investment primarily as means to broader ends, rather than potentially rewarding ends in themselves, chips in a poker game, to be played *ad hoc* as the cards are dealt on a wide variety of issues, both economic and non-economic—the logic behind such things as the grain embargo and the Jackson-Vanik bill. Or we could drop all barriers (except those clearly and directly relevant to our national security), treating the Soviet Union as just another trading and investment partner.

I think it is high time that we decided what we want, and critically and comprehensively looked at what we stand to gain and lose through our economic ties with the U.S.S.R.

No administration in my lifetime has spoken, or acted, clearly on this issue. Yet no issue, except that of our national defense, is more relevant to our country and our competition with the Soviet Union.

Consider the case of our bilateral trade. The Soviets usually have a multitude of potential suppliers eagerly lined up to provide them the non-strategic goods and commodities they want. That's why unilateral U.S. attempts to win Soviet concessions by withholding exports haven't worked, and aren't likely to work as well as we would like them to.

As long as that situation prevails—if our foreign friends can sell all the non-strategic items the Soviets need; if they have no intention of cutting back on their exports, no matter what we do or say; and, on the contrary, if they are actually carving out larger market shares through unfair trading practices—then we are only shooting ourselves in the foot when we alone refuse to compete.

Of course, the reverse logic holds, too. If there are trade items where we are the sole or clearly preferred supplier, or other forms of economic leverage we have over Moscow, then we should not hesitate to use that pressure judiciously in pursuit of important goals, including non-economic goals. For example, we should seriously consider whether we can use current Soviet hard currency shortfalls growing out of the drop in oil prices to wrest concessions from the Kremlin.

Certainly, I have no desire to subsidize the Soviet state. No thinking American does. But I do want to see our economy strong. I do want us to take advantage of all trade opportunities to revitalize our industry and agriculture, as long as we are not simultaneously undermining other U.S. interests.

And, equally important, I do want to see all sectors of our economy treated fairly, both in combating foreign competition and bearing any burdens imposed by the needs of our foreign policy. Let's quit putting this monkey solely on the backs of our farmers or any other single group. That's bad policy toward the Soviets. That's unfair policy toward our own people.

#### We Can Deal with the Soviets

We can deal with the Soviets, in both senses of the word.

We can handle anything they throw at us—militarily, economically, and politically. We just have to get our act together—know where we want to go, have a plan for getting there, stick to that plan and be willing to pay the price.

And we can interact and negotiate with the Soviets with great success on many—though not all—issues. We have some important things to gain, if we can just keep clearly in mind what they are. And we have the resources to achieve those gains—both the "sticks" and "carrots" to bring Moscow around closer to where we want it to be.