earlier, were still sweeping pools of melted snow into bigger pools with straw brooms. There was a long line outside the Mausoleum, and outside of the fact that Stalin was no longer lying next to Lenin (Khrushchev evicted his corpse) nothing had changed, not even the conversation.

Once again, a small crowd reassured me that under their new leader democratization was under way. They said exactly the same things about Mikhail Gorbachev that their parents had said 27 years ago about Nikita Khrushchev.

### Image v. Reality

But one year after this new Red Square experience of mine, Soviet troops laid thirty million land mines in Afghanistan. (They are still there and will continue to kill and maim millions of people over many years.) Two years later, the Soviet Union sent a half billion dollars' worth of war matériel and equipment to the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. Recent years have also seen poison gas used in Georgia (even though the Soviet Union has signed three international agreements prohibiting any use of chemical weapons), bombers supplied to Libya, missiles to Assad, and a continuation of Soviet policies supporting totalitarian regimes.

Was all this done without Gorbachev's knowledge, perhaps as a conspiracy or by an insubordinate underling? Did the troops lay those thirty million land mines in Afghanistan of their own accord? Did the Party treasurer secretly transfer half a billion dollars into the Nicaraguans' bank account?

It seldom occurs to Westerners to ask these kinds of questions. Mikhail Gorbachev is given every benefit of the doubt — more, in fact, than we are accustomed to give our own politicians. He simply couldn't be the administrator of an "evil empire," we rationalize.

I realize that there is another side to this and that there are many who would say that I have offered only a very select list of the deeds or misdeeds of the Soviet leader; that he has been responsible for real change and he has brought an openness that was unknown, really unknown before, to the Soviet Union and by example, to all of Eastern Europe. All of this is true. In fact, his new policies of openness and restructuring have made *glasnost* and *perestroika* part of nearly every nation's language. And those thirty million land mines were, after all, laid as the Soviet Union was *leaving* Afghanistan, so, deadly as they are, perhaps they are less important than the fact that the Soviets withdrew and that the expansionism of the Soviet Union lies, according to Gorbachev, in the past.

> "Gorbachev made his first serious public relations error; he chose to side against the demonstrators in Tiananmen Square in a chapter of history destined to be written in their honor."

But why did the Soviets invade Afghanistan in the first place? It was to insure that the government in Kabul would remain answerable to the Kremlin. After nine years of unsuccessfully trying to eradicate the Mujahedeen, they withdrew, but they left a puppet government still in place. Shrewdly, they guessed what would happen: Western support for the Mujahedeen is declining week by week. It may well be that the Soviets will achieve their aim in Afghanistan soon and that the invasion was, in reality, a great success.

It is my belief that Mikhail Gorbachev seeks to do what no other leader of the post-war Soviet Union — not Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Andropov, or Chernenko — has been able to accomplish: to destroy the Western Alliance. He wants to "undo" it rather than frontally attack it, by physical and psychological means. I also believe that he is encouraging Europe and Asia to free themselves of their ties to the United States.

### About the Author

For twelve years Bruce Herschensohn has been the nightly political commentator for KABC-TV "Eyewitness News" in Los Angeles. Prior to joining the ABC affiliate, he spent over a decade in Washington, D.C. serving as an assistant to the President during the Nixon administration and as the director of the Motion Picture and Television Service of the U.S. Information Agency. He was also a member of the Reagan transition team in 1980. He is the author of *The Gods of the Antenna* and has written for the *New York Times, Newsweek,* the *Washington Post,* and *USA Today.*

### Tiananmen Square

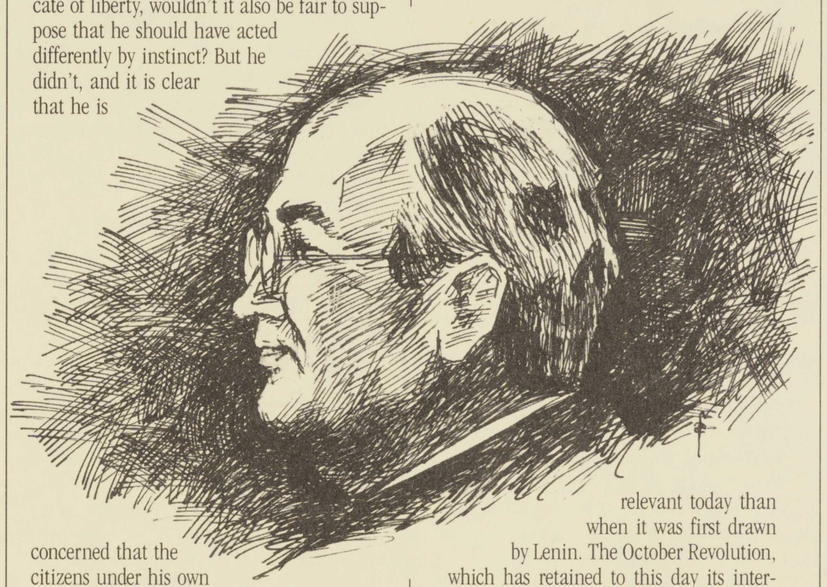
Is his scheme going to work? Perhaps. But something happened recently in another communist empire, in Tiananmen Square, which may help to open the West's eyes. Deng Xiaoping is very much like Mikhail Gorbachev. He has been cast, whenever possible by the media, as a genuine reformer. His imposition of martial law and brutal persecution of the populace of Tibet in the months prior to the May 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre received scant media attention. His continued support for the Khmer Rouge is unremarked and the silkworm missiles he has supplied to Iran were, like Gorbachev's similar deeds, someone else's fault.

But Tiananmen Square changed all that. Deng's dreams of the future are futile: normalization of relations with Taiwan; Hong Kong's entrepreneurial class remaining on after the expiration of Great Britain's lease; wooing the world with trade and tourism — all are gone, at least during his lifetime. The guards are watching Tiananmen Square to make sure that the demonstrators can never do what they did last May ever again, but it is too late to still pretend to the world that Deng Xiaoping's China is on the road to reform.

Gorbachev's own reaction to Tiananmen Square and the Chinese citizenry's quest for liberty was not the sophisticated, well thought out, Western-oriented response we have come to expect from him. It might be that he was piqued that his visit to China was reduced to a sideshow rather than a main attraction, but he delivered an angry public charge that the demonstrators were hotheads. Then, in quick recognition of his error, he decided to simply ignore the demonstrations that were causing postponements and cancellations of his scheduled appearances. When he boarded the plane headed for home, he erupted again through his government-controlled news agency, lashing out at the People's Republic of China for not doing enough to contain the demonstrators.

Gorbachev made his first serious public relations error; he chose to side against the demonstrators in Tiananmen Square in a chapter of history destined to be written in their honor. If we suppose that he is an advocate of liberty, wouldn't it also be fair to suppose that he should have acted differently by instinct? But he didn't, and it is clear that he is concerned that the citizens under his own dominion may be inspired to imitate the Chinese, maybe even right in Red Square.

> "The key question in U.S. foreign policy today is not, 'Who is the real Gorbachev?' It is, rather, "How do we best protect our nation?"



### Détente and the "Peace Dividend"

Several years ago, Gorbachev announced, "In October of 1917 we parted with the old world, rejecting it once and for all. We are moving toward a new world, the world of communism. We shall never turn off that road." He added,

"In the twentieth century, there can be no progress without advance to socialism. This fundamental conclusion is no less relevant today than when it was first drawn by Lenin. The October Revolution, which has retained to this day its international momentum, is the source of the movement's viability."

No it isn't. But Gorbachev's insistence on this point is worth noting. Is this just his public rhetoric? Does he truly want democratization and an end to expansionism? Those are the questions which dominate not only talk shows and academic conferences but the meetings of our foreign policy experts and our elected leaders. And they will inevitably lead to other questions like: If the "evil empire" is no more, why should we pay for such an enormous military complex? Why the MX missile? Why the Strategic Defense Initiative? Why build up the Navy? Why not spend some of that money on social programs? Some call this the "peace dividend" of *glasnost* and *perestroika.* It is really just détente all over again.

If it weren't for these questions, I would feel free to publicly praise Gorbachev for the reforms he has introduced. But our national security is threatened by our over-eager desire to see Gorbachev only as we want to see him and our presumption that he is the key to world peace.

### The Key Question

Let me be very clear on this point: even if Mikhail Gorbachev lived up to our best expectations and were a model democrat, it doesn't change the fact that our nation requires a strong defense. There is no guarantee that Gorbachev will remain in power, nor is there any guarantee that the Soviet Union constitutes the *only* threat to our interests.

The key question in U.S. foreign policy today is not, "Who is the real Gorbachev?" It is, rather, "How do we best protect our nation?" Answering this question is not technical or complex, as the experts would allege. It is as simple as the two policies I mentioned earlier: Remember Pearl Harbor. Support any friend, oppose any foe. These are policies which millions of Americans understand and support. It is time to act upon them again.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