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Reply

Anyone unwise enough to try to predict the pattern of change in a highly differentiated area such as Eastern Europe is fair game to his peers, and it is obvious that I am no exception. I am most grateful to Professors Croan and Griffith for their thoughtful, insightful, and stimulating comments. I am prepared to argue below that there is not really any major disagreement between us and that the different interpretations of the possible outcomes of the political, economic, and social processes taking place in Eastern Europe are largely due to differences in perception and emphasis.

In the course of discussing the problem of misperception in international relations, Robert Jervis hypothesized some time ago that “scholars and decision-makers are apt to err by being too wedded to the established view and too closed to new information, as opposed to being too willing to alter their theories.”¹ He also suggested that this was at least partly related to a tendency to fit incoming information into existing theories and images, and that it gave rise to still another tendency whereby “actors see the behavior of others as more centralized, disciplined, and coordinated than it is.”² If these hypotheses are correct, as I believe they are, then it appears that they are more relevant to Croan’s and Griffith’s comments than they are to mine. In other words, whereas I interpret the changes occurring in Eastern Europe as being not only significant but also moving in a specific direction, my colleagues tend to be more cautious and perceive the changes as being much less extensive.

The second basic difference between us seems to be that while I view the East European states as not essentially different from other countries facing the crises and problems associated with modernization and development—a view most forcefully and convincingly articulated by John Kautsky³—they still seem to treat the Communist countries as *sui generis*.

Third, I was taken sharply to task by both Croan and Griffith for ignoring the possible impact of external factors on the area. The criticism is well taken and I plead guilty. All I can say is that I am obviously well aware of the decisive importance of outside influences, and I stated so twice in my paper. How-

1. Robert Jervis, “Hypotheses on Misperception,” *World Politics*, 20, no. 3 (1968): 459.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 455 and 475.

3. For his most recent statement see John H. Kautsky, “Comparative Communism versus Comparative Politics,” *Studies in Comparative Communism*, 6, nos. 1-2 (1973): 135-70.

ever, my original purpose was to explore the prospects for change in Eastern Europe with the aid of various theoretical constructs, nearly all of which focus on *internal* processes at the expense of *external* influences. Thus, to some extent, the neglect of the exogenous factors should first of all be laid at the feet of the various “models” and “paradigms” which, one should add, have indeed been criticized for leaving out the foreign influences.⁴ Still, Professors Croan and Griffith are perfectly justified in pointing out that the absence of any discussion of the impact of the Soviet Union on Eastern Europe makes my analysis highly unrealistic. *Mea culpa!* With more space at my disposal I would undoubtedly have included an analysis of external influences. I shall, in fact, take advantage of my right to reply to comment briefly below on this particular issue.

These are then the main reasons for, and areas of, disagreement between my colleagues and myself. With this in mind, let me respond to some of the specific criticisms beginning with those offered by Professor Griffith.

Starting with the premise that “predictions based on history . . . remain essentially subjective” (a statement I wholeheartedly agree with) he castigates me for adopting an “unduly optimistic general theory of political development.” Here I would argue that if the generally accepted conventional models of development are indeed “unduly optimistic” then the criticism ought to be directed primarily against the model-builders and not against the model-users. Obviously in trying to forecast the future of Eastern Europe I had several options open to me, and I certainly did not have to avail myself of any particular theory of political development or modernization. However, there were several reasons for applying them to the East European situation: my belief that if the various theories had universal applicability they could and should be utilized in analyzing the process of change in different environments, including that of Eastern Europe; the view that Eastern Europe was not essentially different from other developing-modernizing areas to which these theories have been and are customarily applied; and the desire to look at the future of Eastern Europe in a more systematic fashion. Professor Griffith thinks that all this adds up to an exercise in futility. My feeling is that it is not only a legitimate but also an interesting way of sorting out the various elements and stages in the process of change while keeping in mind all the pitfalls associated with any attempt to predict the future.

I would also argue that neither the theories and models nor my own conclusions are unduly optimistic. I do not anticipate that Eastern Europe will turn democratic or liberal in the near future; I do not see major changes taking place in the ruling parties and bureaucracies; I do not forecast any broad transformation of the existing economic systems. All I am saying is

4. Mark Kesselman, “Order or Movement? The Literature of Political Development as Ideology,” *World Politics*, 26, no. 1 (1973): 149–50.

that the East European societies are likely to become more pluralistic in the generally accepted sense of the word, which, I hasten to add, is not tantamount to their becoming more democratic or pro-Western. In the final analysis I do not see much difference between my hypothesis and Professor Griffith's apparent belief that "modernization . . . leads . . . to rationalization, i.e. decentralization and management efficiency but more likely to some form of oligarchy and elitism than to democracy."⁵

Professor Griffith is right in one respect: I should not have said that the changes in Eastern Europe would be accomplished "smoothly." The correct word should be "incrementally." What I tried to convey was that, in my opinion at least, the process of change in the area would not be accompanied by violent upheavals. It does not mean that the change will always be smooth: most likely the movement will be ratchetlike. However, I do not believe that we shall witness in the near future the repetition of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, to this day the only truly explosive and violent event in Eastern Europe since the Communist takeover. We may see sudden changes in the top leadership, we may even witness riots and demonstrations reminiscent of the Polish events of 1956, 1968, and 1970, but I strongly suspect that we are past the era of mass violence and terror, which are not in the interest of the Soviet Union, the East European ruling elites, or, for that matter, the people in the area.

I am also chastised by Professor Griffith for overstating the significance of "economic discontent" as a causal factor at the expense of "native nationalism." It may well be that as an economist *manqué* I tend to attach great importance to economic factors. However, I cannot help noticing that the history of Eastern Europe of the last twenty-five years is replete with examples of governments giving way to popular pressures resulting from economic hardships, either by modifying their harsh economic policies or by instituting economic reforms (East Germany, 1963; Czechoslovakia, 1966–69; Hungary, 1953–55 and 1968; Poland, 1956–58 and 1971), and that economic liberalization was more often than not accompanied by some political relaxation. I am the last person to deny the significance of nationalism; my own observations, admittedly subjective and hence suspect, tell me that East European nationalism, highly intensive in the late 1950s and early 1960s, has been on the decline in the last decade or so.

I do not think that there is really much disagreement between Professors Griffith and Croan and myself regarding the outcome of the possible conflicts between the "reds" and the "experts," and between the elites and the masses. My own view is that the traditional image of a homogenous party bureaucracy

5. William E. Griffith, "Communist Cadre Training: Source, Indication, and Reflection of Political Liberalization and Change" (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Research Project on Communism, Revisionism and Revolution, no. A/69-14), pp. 9–10.

can no longer be sustained and that the growing heterogeneity of political elites resulting from “co-optation” is itself the outcome of societal processes taking place in the area. The process of problem-solving in developing and modernizing societies is never easy, since it increasingly involves more and more trade-offs. However, unlike my colleagues I do not think that mass and elite frustrations which are bound to grow in time will lead to a “system crisis” but to a search for a gradual accommodation and incremental adaptation.⁶

Professors Croan and Griffith can and do point to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 as invalidating my “optimistic” hypothesis regarding the prospects for change in Eastern Europe, especially with respect to pluralization. To be sure, at first glance they may be right. It seems to me, however, that an argument can be made that Czechoslovakia in 1968 represented a “special case” which could have gone either way and that the Soviet intervention was not at all inevitable.

It appears that Professor Griffith disagrees with me most strongly with regard to East Germany as representing a “synthesis of communism and nationalism.” He denies the validity of my assertion that the process of nation-building in that country has been relatively successful, although he agrees with me that the process of state-building in East Germany has been largely accomplished. My feeling is that the disagreement between us is not as strong as he implies and that it may be due primarily to different interpretations of the concept of “nation-building.” I take the latter to mean simply, in Almond’s and Powell’s words, “a process whereby people transfer their commitment and loyalty from smaller [units] . . . to the larger central political system. While these two processes of state and nation building are related, it is important to view them separately.”⁷ In other words I believe that the Honecker regime (possibly even the Ulbricht regime) has succeeded in generating more than just a modicum of such loyalty and commitment, and that today, in 1974, after the worldwide legitimization of the DDR regime, the growth of East German national consciousness will be accelerated still further.

Let me now turn to Professor Croan’s comments. It seems to me that our disagreements are more a matter of emphasis than of interpretation. I have already dealt with the question of “exogenous variables,” and it is clear that neglecting them was probably an error. This is not the place to remedy that omission, however, except by venturing a guess that the inclusion of external factors would not have materially affected my hypothesis. My reading of future relations between the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe leads me to

6. For a perceptive analysis of this process see David Lane, “Dissent and Consent Under State Socialism,” *Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, 13, no. 1 (1972): 37–44.

7. Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, Jr., *Comparative Politics* (Boston and Toronto, 1966), p. 36.

believe that the former is perhaps not as much concerned with the latter as even five years ago, and accordingly may adopt a more benign attitude toward the changes in the area than in the past.

To return to Professor Croan's comments, he (and others) may well be right in making a "critical distinction" between modernization and development. I confess that the distinction has largely escaped me thus far and that I do not consider it as either crucial or useful, at least in political science as contrasted with economics. On the other hand, as suggested earlier, I do make a distinction between nation- and state-building in the East European context, even though I am the first to admit that the two concepts are often difficult to disentangle and "operationalize." Professor Croan (as Professor Griffith before him) raises the question of East German nationhood, and although I am sorely tempted to yield to him in view of his recognized expertise on that particular country, I am not completely persuaded that he is right.⁸

I fully agree that the "problem of proper terminology becomes especially acute" with respect to the use of social science concepts in the analysis of Communist societies. Because of that I do question Professor Croan's reference to the gap between *pays réel* and *pays legal* in Poland. To me the existence of such a gap implies total absence of the regime's legitimacy and the presence of a society totally alienated from its rulers. Although this may have been true throughout Eastern Europe during the first decade or so of Communist rule, I submit that it is hardly the case today—twenty-five years after the Communist takeover. Things do change even in Eastern Europe, and with the possible exception of Czechoslovakia the new generation in the various countries does not necessarily view the ruling elites as totally deprived of legitimacy.

To Professor Croan's basic question: "What difference does it make that the East European political systems whose future we aspire to probe are Communist regimes?" my answer would be: largely none. I have already indicated my strong sympathy with John Kautsky's argument that "Communist phenomena are not distinguished from non-Communist ones by any particular characteristics,"⁹ which means that the East European systems are not unique but simply constitute a genus in the family of modernizing or developing countries. If this is true, as I believe it is, then the questions of the erosion of ideology and of the maintenance of the privileged status and "leading role" of the party should be discussed in a global rather than a purely Communist or East European context, as being subject to pressures present in other, non-Communist countries undergoing societal transformation. This is essentially

8. For an interesting discussion of this issue see Sylva Sinanian, Istvan Deak, and Peter C. Ludz, eds., *Eastern Europe in the 1970s* (New York, 1972), pp. 242–45 and 250–51.

9. Kautsky, "Comparative Communism versus Comparative Politics," p. 141.

what I tried to do in my attempt to analyze the prospects for change in Eastern Europe.

The question can be raised whether predicting the future should be one of the legitimate concerns of social scientists. Professor Croan cites with approval Dankwart Rustow's admonition that since much of political change is determined by men, "it is the social scientist's function to ascertain the margin of human choice and to clarify the choices in that margin." I fully agree. In my effort to predict the future of Eastern Europe I did not imply that the process of change was autonomous or automatic, spontaneous or uncontrollable. Far from it. All I meant to say was that the East European ruling elites and masses are after all human and, as such, subject to strains and stresses experienced by elites and masses in other parts of the globe. In light of this, I hypothesized that when faced with the necessity of making choices "at the margin" they will not behave very differently from their counterparts in non-Communist societies. Thus I do not entirely concur with Professor Griffith's assertion that the "East European Communist elites and the Soviet elites behind them are not the servants but . . . the masters of the economic and social forces." I think they are both, if only because they are human.

It was also Rustow who said that "in presuming to predict mankind's inevitable bliss or doom [a social scientist] is forsaking his vocation."¹⁰ I beg to differ. I would agree with Professor Griffith that since the study of politics is an art, predictions in that realm are subjective and best judged "according to the previous batting average of the predictor." Does this mean, however, that we should confine ourselves strictly to explanations, refusing to look beyond the present? I should think not, and taking my cue once again from Inkeles I would argue that with respect to both models and predictions, "There are richer and poorer ones. There are the more sensitive and less sensitive. There are those which are more appropriate to one time or place than another. All have a piece of the truth," even though none of them are really adequate for forecasting the course of change in "richly complex historical cases."¹¹

It seems to me that in attempting to make a prognosis of the future we are in fact making a contribution to knowledge if only by examining our initial assumptions, which, after all, are always tenuous and in need of constant re-validation. By criticizing each other's predictions we are forced to go back to the fundamentals and to re-examine our conclusions, which in time tend frequently to acquire the status of "conventional wisdoms." That is why I found my exchange with Professors Croan and Griffith highly valuable and rewarding, and I am most grateful to them for their willingness to participate in what I consider to be a stimulating discussion.

10. Dankwart A. Rustow, *A World of Nations* (Washington, D.C., 1967), p. 17.

11. Alex Inkeles, "Models and Issues in the Analysis of Soviet Society," *Survey*, no. 60 (July 1966), p. 3.