force for stability, a common denominator in a complex and gigantic country of twenty-two states, nine territories, fifteen official languages, and myriad communal tensions.

But Mrs. Gandhi gradually wore down the strength of the party's regional elements. She wanted no regional kinglets to challenge her. During the sixteen years in which she led India she bent Congress to her will and posted her own loyal men to mind the store in the regions. The great internal political battles in India concerned Mrs. Gandhi's struggles to defeat the regional chiefs who defied her, who represented their people, and had an independent following: men like Sheikh Abdullah in Kashmir, M. G. Ramachandran in Tamil Nadu, the Sikh leaders in Punjab, and N. T. Rama Rao in Andhra Pradesh.

In 1980, at the head of her eponymous Indira Congress party, Mrs. Gandhi made a dramatic return to power thirty-three months after losing it. The Janata party, divided and quarreling, had made a hash of ruling; and opposition parties have remained fragmented since. At her side was her ruthless, scoundrelly, and impatient second son, Sanjay, holding no formal office but throwing out an ominous shadow with his love for the political melee and the odor of power. On his death in an airplane crash six months after his mother's triumphant return, Rajiv was drafted. He became the loyal aide and confidant, the heir apparent. He had the key qualification of being his mother's son, the only person such a suspicious and insecure woman could trust. Of course he knew of the loud complaints about the Nehru dynasty, about nepotism; but, as he said, "The way I look at it, Mummy has to be helped somehow."

Indira Gandhi always had a sense of mission about her role, a passionate instinct for the place of the Nehrus in India's march. Rajiv, methodical, serious, cautious, diffident, not at all assertive, no natural politico, did not share his mother's sense of destiny, the belief that she was the embodiment of the popular will, though he was certainly imbued with an historical idea. He is, after all, a Nehru.

As his mother's lieutenant and heir, Rajiv Gandhi saw at first hand how politics work in India. He became a general secretary in the Congress. He watched as his mother undermined the centers of opposition power in Sikkim, in Kashmir, Punjab, and Andhra Pradesh. As it turned out, her attempt to get rid of the charismatic leader in Andhra was a mistake. There was uproar. And in Punjab there was an ugly mess—a power play and politics on a volcano of resentments and extremist feelings.

Mrs. Gandhi had employed her usual crisis method in Punjab: She had given the extremists plenty of time in the hope that they would burn themselves out. But there was the matter of terrorism, a constant affront that few governments can endure for long. The Indian government's assault on the Golden Temple signed Mrs. Gandhi's death warrant.

In respect to Punjab, to Andhra Pradesh, to Assam, to many other places and issues, Rajiv Gandhi learned much in his four years at his mother's side. He has to consider her legacy as well as his abilities. He is not going to be Mrs. Gandhi II. His mother would have argued that her long tenure, her centralizing of power, and her snuffing of regional ambitions have been critical factors in the forging of national unity in such a young, fissiparous country. She would have said that she forged a sense of nationhood. And it is true that she embodied the idea of a united India.

But Rajiv Gandhi knows that if his country is to remain truly democratic, some strength will have to be restored to the Congress, that the regions will have to have room to maneuver to assert their own identities, to have state rights. Congress under Mrs. Gandhi depended entirely on the power of her personality, and her son does not have that sort of personality.

In the short term, India will no doubt rally to Rajiv's flag. Indians, wherever they live, whatever language they speak, are very proud of India and would not like it to fracture. In the long term, Mr. Gandhi will have to strike a difficult balance: He will have to resolve the Punjab question and placate the brusied Sikhs. He will have to redevelop the democratic network of Congress, to give the regions more power yet prevent them from growing too powerful. He will have to assert himself in the party to prevent the ambitious from unseating him. He will have to show strength and statesmanship in foreign policy. In particular, he needs to improve the dismal relationship with Pakistan. He has also to be politically altruistic, to find ways of improving the opposition in a country where politics have grown somewhat flabby in thirty-seven years of one-party rule. For a pilot, it is a tough takeoff.

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EXCURSUS 2

Robert J. Myers on
NATO AT THIRTY-FIVE

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." This seems to be the slogan of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which hosted in October a small delegation of observers organized by CRIA and financed by a NATO grant. In briefings at Brussels, Rome, and Naples the theme was the numerical advantage of the Warsaw Pact in conventional forces and weapons and the continuing deployment by the Soviets of more and more SS-20 intermediate-range nuclear missiles. The new deployments more than compensate for the Pershing IIs and cruise missiles in West Germany and the sixteen cruise missiles now operational in Sicily.

Why, then, a considerably perkier spirit in NATO in 1984 than was apparent during a similar visit last fall? There are two factors to take into account in judging military strength: not only actual military forces, but political will. For NATO, the decision to deploy the Pershing IIs and cruise missiles in Europe, aimed at targets in the Western part of the Soviet Union, was a thirty-fifth anniversary present. And the grand old alliance of sixteen countries successfully withstood the Soviet Union's threats and its walkout from the Geneva arms talks. Unquestionably, there is more self-confidence in NATO today than a year ago. How far this is warranted is, in my view, something else again.

The view from Italy and the Sixth Fleet, Allied Forces Southern Europe, is bullish indeed. All Italian political parties, including the Communists, support the NATO shield.
Encouraged by the Catholic Church, the Italian populace accepted the deployment of cruise missiles with scarcely a murmur. The Sixth Fleet is stronger than ever. The number of ships remains at some twenty-six, but over the past thirty years the tonnage has tripled; carriers have fattened from 50,000 to 90,000 tons. Electrical power-generating capacity, to operate the sophisticated offensive and defensive weapons, is up sixfold. Twelve times as many targets can be reached by air.

While the Soviet fleet in the Mediterranean is the subject of concern and elaborate surveillance, it is not considered an offensive threat. There are on average thirty-seven Soviet ships on station (including seven submarines), but only 35 per cent are combat vessels, with the rest support. The Soviets have no bases in the Mediterranean. In the event of a conventional war, the Soviet fleet would be out of action in a week. The superiority of Warsaw Pact forces makes no splash in the Mediterranean.

In the eyes of Washington thinktanks, there are two principal dangers to the NATO Fleet: a possible nuclear attack and the increasing difficulty of tracking Soviet submarines with existing electronic devices, owing to the buildup of noise clutter in the sea. The first would certainly put an end to any notion of deterrence and lead to an unprecedented situation. The second poses new problems in thinking about conventional war. At least 2,500 ships are in the Mediterranean at any one time, adding to ocean noise and to radar-identification difficulties.

As for nuclear arms control, the NATO advice is patience and perseverance in dealing with the Soviet Union. Too much is expected in this area, they say; the burden is too great. The one thing at which the Soviets have been successful is building nuclear weapons, and they are not likely to be flexible in this area short of a larger political agreement. This kind of negotiation does not seem to be in the cards anyway, given the ill health of Chemenko and the loss by the end of this year? And if not, what about NATO solidarity? The British Labor party continues to expound in its platform the virtues of British nuclear disarmament. Patience and probing in other areas—economic, cultural—may be all that can be done at this time.

For the present the NATO deterrence shield is strong. But as with the arms talks, is too much being expected of this military alliance? It professes a very limited political and economic role, beyond the military facing-down of the Warsaw Pact. But it is precisely the political and economic factors that threaten the shield. Will the Dutch deploy missiles by the end of this year? And il not, what about NATO solidarity? The British Labor party continues to expound in its platform the virtues of British nuclear disarmament.

On the economic front, the European Economic Community in March could not even agree on a sum for its milk subsidy. If there is to be an increase in conventional forces to raise the nuclear threshold, which has become increasingly unconvincing, where will the additional funds come from?

All these factors keep the NATO planners at a high level of efficiency, working to deter the next war or, if that fails, to prevail in the last one. Political will continues to determine the outcome.

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EXCURSUS 3

Stephen Brockmann on RUMBLINGS IN THE EAST

The recent uproar in both East and West Germany over the cancellation of East German leader Erich Honecker's visit to West Germany illustrates well the ambiguity of the relationship between the two nations and of each with its particular power bloc. The tensions between the Soviet Union and the East German leadership actually antedate the massive campaign that Pravda had been waging against Honecker's visit in the months preceding its cancellation, something often overlooked by the Western press. In fact, the tensions date back to the beginning of deployment of the American Pershing II missiles in West Germany in December of 1983 and are a function of two radically different views within the Eastern bloc of how to respond to this deployment.

Following the November, 1983, decision of the West German Bundestag to allow Pershing II's on West German soil, the Soviet Union broke off negotiations in Geneva and went forward with plans to counter this deployment with new missile deployments in East Germany. As early as October of 1983, while Yuri Andropov was dying, the Soviet military had announced plans to proceed with deployment. At the same time, articles in the East German Party newspaper Neues Deutschland countered these Soviet plans with warnings that the Eastern bloc should not overreact to Western developments and that, as Honecker noted, "it is better to negotiate ten times than to shoot once." On October 22, Neues Deutschland had published a letter from Evangelical Lutheran Church members to Erich Honecker that offered the plain-spoken opinion not only of the small but growing independent East German peace movement but also apparently of the government itself: "It fills us with horror and dread that the deployment of American nuclear weapons in Western Europe, which we all condemn, should also lead to similar nuclear countermeasures in our own country, and that thus we and our children will have to live in close proximity to those weapons." Such open statements, highly unusual in an Eastern bloc country, indicated that sentiment in East Germany against new Soviet nuclear weapons might cause the Soviet Union as many problems in dealing with "its" Germany as the United States Government had been having with its own.

What was at stake were different ways of responding to American deployment. By November of 1983 the West German Government, with support from Hungary, had come down firmly in favor of a policy of Schadengrenzung, the containment of damage. This policy not only viewed the "counterdeployment" of Soviet missiles negatively; it also favored continuing negotiations with the United States, even in the face of further deployment.

Nevertheless, with the illness and then death of Andropov, the hard-liners in the Soviet Union, headed by foreign minister Andrei Gromyko, began to gain the upper hand. The December deployment of American missiles in Western Europe strengthened their position, and they and their supporters within the East German Politburo, headed by Defense