

Giscard out to stop 'otherwise inevitable' war

by Rachel Douglas

On Sunday, May 18, President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing of France flew to Warsaw, Poland for a summit meeting with Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev. Arranged secretly and announced only at the last minute, the unscheduled summitry shocked the NATO alliance—especially the Carter administration.

Brezhnev and Giscard met for five hours. There was no communique from their discussions, but when the French president landed in Paris, he said the summit had achieved its goal of “explanations at the highest level, with the aim of reducing tensions.” French radio described Giscard’s journey as an attempt to avoid a war which would otherwise be “inevitable,” adding that the president sought to strengthen Mr. Brezhnev’s policy line in the U.S.S.R. since it favors cooperation with the Europeans.

The first high-level East-West contact since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan just before the first of this year, the meeting in Warsaw shattered the fragile facade of alliance unity constructed in NATO by the Carter administration over several months. The snub was deliberate; when Giscard talked personally with Carter by telephone on Thursday, May 15, concerning the proposal to boycott the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow, his imminent trip to see Brezhnev was not mentioned.

Both Washington and London reacted to the dramatic diplomatic development in Warsaw with a mixture of outrage and misvaluation. Secretary of State Edmund Muskie, who had met his fellow NATO foreign ministers

in Europe during the previous week, was reportedly “mad as hell” that France proceeded without informing the U.S. His protests over not being consulted, expressed at a May 20 press conference in Washington, sounded feeble, however, because of the Carter administration’s failure to consult or inform the allies before the abortive raid into Iran just three weeks earlier.

In London, the British Foreign Office said tersely, “Our feelings are not for the record.”

At the end of his talks with Brezhnev, Giscard endorsed a Soviet call to hold an international summit of world leaders to discuss ways to prevent war. Giscard suggested that it be held with a smaller number of countries participating, but the effective commitment of France to work for such a meeting is a major event.

Informed political sources indicated that as long as an international summit is on the agenda, a critical margin of global security will be preserved. In anticipation of the summit, these sources said, it is understood in France that the U.S.S.R. will exercise extreme caution in responding to what Moscow considers to be provocations carried out by the United States or NATO. The Soviets will do “nothing,” with the exception of a possible military move into China under certain circumstances, as an ultimate warning to the West.

Neither Washington nor London confessed any understanding of what the summit had accomplished, nor what prompted it. In fact, the stage was set by two meetings held the week of May 12: the NATO ministerial



Brezhnev, with Gromyko, meets Giscard d'Estaing in Warsaw May 19.

Photo: Sygma

session in Brussels and the summit of the Warsaw Treaty Organization countries in Poland.

Giscard finalized his plan to meet Brezhnev after witnessing pressure tactics applied to the allies by Muskie and U.S. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown on the question of harnessing the whole of NATO to American policies in the Middle East. When on May 15 in Vienna, with the Soviet foreign minister sitting five feet away, Muskie delivered a tirade against the U.S.S.R. as comparable to Hitler Germany, Giscard accepted the Polish and Russian bid for a meeting.

Also in Vienna, the French received a hint from Gromyko that proposals fielded by Giscard for a solution to the Afghanistan crisis might serve as a basis for negotiation, contrasting sharply to a British "neutralization plan" for Afghanistan that Moscow had rejected.

Euromissile question revived

The question of NATO's deployment of 600 new, medium-range nuclear missiles in Western Europe—with 4-minute flight time of Soviet targets—was on Giscard and Brezhnev's agenda. Paris, not party to the December 12, 1979, decision for this deployment because France is not part of NATO's military organization, had previously steered clear of this crucial issue.

The May 13 communiqué of the Warsaw Pact summit, the document which called for an immediate summit of leaders from "all regions of the world" to cool out a pre-war situation, once again raised the issue of the

Euromissiles, as they are known. It said that negotiations on this class of weapons could commence if NATO revoked it or *delayed* its implementation. Thus, Moscow and its allies made official an opening to talks previously only hinted at. At the time of the NATO decision in contrast, Gromyko had declared that anything short of complete annulment would make talks "impossible."

The Soviets evaluated the December 12 decision as a fundamental capitulation by Western Europe to the Carter policy of confrontation and, probably, thermo-nuclear war. Moscow military analysts repeatedly called the Euromissiles part of a NATO attempt to create "first strike" capabilities against the Soviet Union. The Soviets pointed out that while Washington—following the so-called "Schlesinger doctrine"—foresees a European theater-limited nuclear war, utilization of these weapons would mark the beginning of full-scale nuclear combat between the Soviet Union and the United States.

The Paris daily *Le Figaro* underscored the pivotal nature of the Euromissile questions in a May 19 commentary by Serge Maffert, after the Giscard-Brezhnev talks. The present international crisis, he wrote, could more accurately be dated to December 12, 1979 than to the Soviet move into Afghanistan.

In April, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of West Germany proposed a "freeze" on implementation of the missile plan. At the time, Moscow commentaries dismissed the idea as meaningless, but in a May 1 interview to the Hungarian daily *Nepszabadsag*, Soviet informa-

tion chief Valentin Falin stated that Western Europe, especially West Germany, understood better now than it had in December that the decision was a threat to its own security.

The Warsaw Pact accompanied its initiatives with a loud drumroll of military preparedness and warnings to the United States. *Pravda* on May 12 accused Washington of attempting "nuclear blackmail" in the Middle East, while Commander in Chief of Warsaw Pact forces Marshal V. Kulikov said at the gathering in Poland that the organization was set to achieve a new, tight centralization and streamlining of forces that would make possible a "permanent mobilization capability."

In a commentary on the NATO meeting, Radio Moscow focused the point the Kremlin wanted Europe to absorb: "It is hard to recall a NATO meeting which took place in such an alarming atmosphere. ... There is a psychological attack by the U.S. on its allies. ... They threaten them with the consequences of the allies' departing from solidarity. Western Europe follows ... with reservations. But the fact remains that they follow. The price might be too high for them. U.S. policy might lead

to the brink of a big war during which entire countries might burn up."

Afghanistan, the Euromissiles and an international summit were the chief items reviewed by Giscard and Brezhnev. But the French made clear, as Maffert wrote in *Le Figaro*, that Giscard intended, not to serve as an East-West "intermediary," but to reestablish the conditions for global detente in East-West relations, to break down "the total wall of incomprehension which separates the West and the Russians on all security matters."

Headlines in America trumpeted that West Germany had been "the most offended" over Giscard's diplomatic foray, because Chancellor Helmut Schmidt was slated to go to Moscow to talk to Brezhnev in June. In reality, Bonn expressed satisfaction. Government spokesman Klaus Boelling called the Warsaw summit a step for detente in the right direction, "a valuable contribution to a revival of the East-West dialogue." Giscard's foreign minister, Jean François-Poncet, flew to Bonn May 20 to brief the West Germans on the talks.

Following Schmidt's decisive landslide victory in North Rhine Westphalian elections May 11, where he

Muskie's first official provocation

Secretary of State Edmund Muskie's first diplomatic engagement with Western Europe and the Soviet Union has convinced both that the United States government remains committed to a policy of confrontation, the same policy which led to President Carter's abortive "rescue aid" in Iran.

In Muskie's first official State Department press conference May 20 upon his return from Europe, he sharply criticized the French government for failing to consult with Washington over the French-Soviet summit in Warsaw. France was undercutting western solidarity by pursuing its own negotiations with the Soviet Union, he charged.

In fact, it was France's perception that the new Secretary of State would do nothing to reverse the Carter administration's foreign policy—which France believes could lead rapidly to World War III—that induced Giscard to travel so hastily to meet with Brezhnev in the first place. Commented the newspaper *France Soir*: "Giscard knew that he ran no other risk than to give one more chance to safeguard peace."

This European perception was the result of Muskie's and Defense Secretary Harold Brown's strenuous efforts to armtwist continental Europe to agree to an extension of NATO outside its treaty-mandated

area, to abandon their independent efforts to achieve a Mideast settlement, and to shift their economies toward military production. Muskie in his press conference back in Washington frankly admitted that his aim was to impose a "limited sovereignty" on Western Europe: "I hope to make clear the limits within which our allies are expected to cooperate, the limits of detente with the Soviet Union," he said.

Europe's leaders were also shocked at Muskie's provocative treatment of Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko when the two met in Vienna last week. Muskie announced before the meeting took place that it would be a mere "fencing exercise" or "diplomatic minuet," in which it would be up to Moscow to decide whether detente should be continued—on Washington's terms—or not. Muskie dismissed as "cosmetic" a proposal by the Afghan government for withdrawal of Soviet troops provided that the United States, Iran and Pakistan would agree not to finance rebel activities against Afghanistan. By contrast, Bonn, Paris and London described the proposal as worthy of thorough examination and consideration.

But, as the Paris daily *Le Monde* May 18-19 pointed out, Muskie's attempt to bluff and bluster at Gromyko backfired against the Secretary of State:

"Widely displayed on Thursday, the smile had gradually disappeared by Friday. At 2000 hours on May 15, when the American Secretary of State left his tête-à-tête meeting with M. Gromyko and walked toward the journalists, he was slightly pale. The few

campaigning for his party on the issue of war or peace, he is politically in an improved position to join Giscard in initiatives to the East. A revived Franco-German power play points the way to the real basis for making emergency war-avoidance efforts like the Giscard-Brezhnev talks succeed. Just before flying to Poland, Giscard met with President José Lopez Portillo of Mexico, on tour in Europe to seek political and economic support for Mexico's industrialization effort: including nuclear power development.

This emphasis in Lopez Portillo's consultations pointed to the soundest element underlying French policy: commitment to economic development of the third world. The French and German effort to create the European Monetary System was aimed at fostering international stability through financing such industrial development, overriding institutions like the International Monetary Fund which couple developing sector loans with demands for austerity and, eventually, population reduction. Giscard's proposals for a new, gold-backed world monetary system, due to be announced in June, require Bonn's wholehearted backing to succeed.

phrases that he dropped in passing left no doubt: after three hours of meeting—checkmate. He could not announce anything positive, and suddenly no longer even thought of reaffirming the American positions.

"The power which launched the boycott of the Moscow games and adopted economic sanctions after the invasion of Afghanistan has just been shown the door by the country it wanted to place in the dock of the accused

The meetings of May 16 were a trial for Muskie, who found disagreements with the foreign ministers of France, Britain and West Germany at every turn.

"[And at the state speeches honoring Austria's 25th anniversary] M. Muskie placed his hands on the speaker's stand but his foot in his mouth. After a few glowing sentences for his hosts, he got right to the point: 'The principles of neutrality, of independence and territorial integrity, so respected in the case of Austria, are today being violated. . . . An aggression anywhere threatens security everywhere. The United States and the countries which support it . . . have decided to continue to say that the price for aggression must be paid.' Despite progress in America's will to maintain the East-West dialogue, on the whole it was like a punch in the jaw.

"Austrian Chancellor Kreisky took on that distant air that one assumes when a guest uses rude words at the table. A mocking, eloquent smile crossed Gromyko's face. His entourage was to call him 'shocked' at this political usage of a ceremonial occasion. . . ."

No hope for Africa in Club of Rome 'dialogue' plan

by Mary Brannan, Wiesbaden correspondent

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) held an economic summit in Lagos, Nigeria on April 28-29, to discuss Africa's disastrous economic plight. The OAU Secretary General Edem Kodjo declared at that summit:

"Africa is living through difficult times, such difficult times that its survival is in question, its future is an enigma. It is far from our wish to blacken the situation which is being laid out in broad daylight in all its precariousness and desperation . . . it is enough for people to look hard at the continent, to count its problems, to analyze its impasses, to establish the situation without complacency for its weaknesses, to recognize the hard and implacable fact, the unbearable fact: Yes, Africa is in danger of death . . . yes, Africa is dying."

Africa is indeed facing a plethora of severe economic problems. A ten-fold increase in the price it has to pay for oil has occurred since 1973. Falling food production and starvation threaten hundreds of thousands in East Africa. It is becoming nearly impossible to obtain loans on the international market—German banks, for example, ceased lending one month ago. Africa is left with virtually no alternative to accepting the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) dictatorship.

Civil war and coups

These are not the only problems facing African leaders. In the last month, civil war in Chad has intensified, there have been military coups in Liberia and Uganda, an attempted coup in Rwanda, rumors of a coup in the Ivory Coast, and an attempted assassination of Guinean head of state Sekou Touré. And beginning May 20, the branch of British intelligence known as "Amnesty International" will launch a destabilization attempt against the government of Zaire, accusing it of "repression."

Africa is indeed in danger of dying, but it is not the unfortunate victim of arbitrary processes. Africa is the victim of Malthusianism, centered in the Club of Rome, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the United Nations Organization, UNESCO, OECD, etc. Malthus was an employee of the British East India Company, and his