

## Moscow shows disquiet after the Geneva talks

by Konstantin George

The Soviet leadership is visibly incensed over the outcome of the Shultz-Gromyko talks in Geneva, an outcome which marks the failure of a month-long Kremlin intimidation campaign against the Reagan administration over its Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). That campaign featured repeated Soviet ultimatums of an unprecedentedly harsh nature demanding that the United States abandon this beam-weapon development program.

The Reagan administration's irrevocable commitment to not only research and development, but the operational deployment of a space-based laser technology system of anti-missile defense was demonstrated conclusively not only at the Shultz-Gromyko talks, but subsequently by Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger's policy statement on the CBS-TV program, "Face The Nation": *Deployment* of the SDI is non-negotiable.

The full flavor of the Soviet leadership's rage at their failure to stop the SDI emerged on Sunday, Jan. 13, when Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, flanked by journalists from the Soviet news agency TASS, the party newspaper *Pravda*, the government newspaper *Izvestia*, and Soviet TV and radio, delivered a two-hour tirade reiterating, in ultimatum language, the demand that the United States abandon the SDI or there would be no further arms talks.

Gromyko's tirade told the Soviet population that the matter of space-based weapons is a "life or death issue." Radio Moscow's summary of the TV spectacle asserted that this would ultimately decide whether "Armageddon" occurred or not. Radio Moscow further stated, citing Gromyko: "He said it was a great mistake for some people in the United States to

believe that the United States would somehow or other achieve dominance by bringing to completion its plans to set up a strategic antiballistic-missile defense system . . . and that the Soviet Union would thus be in a subordinated position. . . . This situation was impossible."

At minimum, the Gromyko TV spectacular was designed to prepare the Soviet population for the contingency of the Soviets breaking off negotiations.

There is one point concerning the Soviets which one cannot afford to underestimate:

They are furious at the failure to date of their intimidation tactics. They have not managed to cause the President of the United States and his defense secretary to move one iota away from the SDI commitment. The Soviet ultimatums of "abandon the SDI or else" beginning with the Chernenko statement of Dec. 5 that the SDI would render all previous arms control agreements "null and void"; the *Pravda* editorial with the same threat on Dec. 12; the ultimatum issued by Politburo member Mikhail Gorbachev during his London visit in mid-December, that the U.S.A. must halt planned ASAT tests scheduled for March "or else"; and numerous threatening statements concerning the SDI question since—all have failed.

What is clear besides anger, fury, and conditioning of the Soviet population for a possible collapse of talks and the ensuing contingency of a confrontation, are the unmistakable signs that the Kremlin has not made up its mind as to what concrete steps to take in the next days and weeks concerning the United States, let alone whether or when to utilize Soviet military options in Europe, the Far East, or the developing sector.

This fact should in no way serve to encourage illusions that because of current Kremlin uncertainty, there is no foreseeable danger emanating from the Soviet Union. The very fact that the Kremlin leadership is furious at the prospect of an unstoppable U.S. SDI could lead them to exercise some of the most dangerous strategic policy options available to them.

There is no doubt that an interlude of uncertainty reigns for the time being. The clearest proof of this is the chronology surrounding and leading up to the now canceled meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact, a "super-summit" involving all Warsaw Pact party chairmen, heads of state, foreign ministers, and defense ministers.

The gala event was scheduled for about one week after the January 7-8 Shultz-Gromyko meeting in Geneva, followed by the Jan. 10 Politburo meeting to assess the Geneva results. It was to produce a definitive Warsaw Pact policy statement on conduct towards the United States and the West.

To prepare for the event, Warsaw Pact Commander in Chief Marshal Viktor Kulikov of the Soviet Union went on an early January tour of all Warsaw Pact capitals, beginning with Sofia and culminating in Warsaw on Jan. 9. The East German defense ministry newsweekly, *Volksarmee*, published a "letter" asking what a meeting of the Political Consultative Committee is, accompanied by a formally printed reply.

Then came the Geneva meeting. Clearly, something happened the Russians did not anticipate.

First, the Politburo met on Thursday, Jan. 10 for its weekly meeting. The ensuing Politburo declaration, after stating that the Politburo had heard Gromyko's report on the Geneva talks, carried the unusual formulation that it had merely "unanimously noted the importance" of the talks. The usual verb "approved," as in the typical phrase "heard and approved," was curiously absent.

The next day, Friday, Jan. 11, Western media reported that the mid-January date for the Political Consultative Committee meeting had been "fixed" for Tuesday, Jan. 15.

Then came the Gromyko TV performance, followed within 24 hours by the abrupt announcement, on Monday, Jan. 14—a mere 24 to 48 hours before the meeting was to have started—that the summit was canceled. No reason or explanation was given, and no new date was set.

This is the first time in Soviet-Warsaw Pact history that such a high-level meeting has been canceled, let alone 24-48 hours before it was due to start.

The Kremlin's policy priority remains stopping the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative, as a Radio Moscow commentary on Friday, Jan. 11 by Yuri Saltov, one day after the Politburo meeting, again underscored: "It is of primary importance to stop the arms race from penetrating into space."

But how to reach this policy goal, what means to employ against the United States and the West to do so, are at least temporarily open questions in the Kremlin.

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## Documentation

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# Gromyko threatens to break off talks

*On Jan. 13, Andrei Gromyko presented himself to the Soviet public in a very unusual, "Meet the Press" televised format. He was interviewed for two hours by Yuri Zhukov of Pravda, Vikenti Matveev of Izvestia, V. Bogachev of TASS, and V. Zorin of state TV and Radio.*

**Q:** Andrei Andreevich, in connection with this question of a large-scale anti-missile defense program by the United States, Washington usually says that they have in mind only scientific research work, which allegedly does not contradict the ABM Treaty, and not the testing and deployment of such systems. How must one relate to such a position?

**Gromyko:** Who can guarantee that they will stop after the completion of the scientific research work? Won't you find people then, scientists and non-scientists, who will say: Sorry, we spent so many billions of dollars on scientific research, why waste this money? Isn't it better to proceed to the next phase of testing and deployment?

Is such a situation possible? It is possible. We know the handwriting of the American administration, and we are familiar with the situation in the United States. Therefore I wish to firmly underline that a policy of conducting scientific research work with the aim of creating a large-scale missile-defense system does not withstand criticism, neither politically nor morally. It is vulnerable, it must be rejected. Frankly speaking, there is only a very small distance from such a position to the absurd.

**Q:** The American side has in mind to only "explain the significance of these systems for strengthening peace." How do you evaluate such declarations?

**Gromyko:** If there are such voluntarist interpretations of the American position in the context of the agreement which was reached in Geneva, then they don't express the spirit of this agreement, if you understand it like any reasonable person must understand it. If someone has in mind a situation, where one side would only explain its position on the space question, while the other side is only listening—well, we don't have in mind such a seminar. This would be a useless, vain occupation.

**Q:** Let's say that the U.S.A., considering its conduct in the past, would violate part of the agreement concerning the

necessity to prevent an arms race in space. What would be the consequences of such a situation?

**Gromyko:** The consequences would be extremely severe. The talks would be destroyed. We made such a warning to the American representatives. There is no choice and no middle way. Either you don't permit an arms race in space and keep it unmilitarized, or there will be an arms race. Then space will become a terrible arena for the deployment of weapon systems and present a huge threat for the very existence of mankind. When you speak about the so-called "Star Wars," a large-scale system of missile defense, then you are speaking about life or death. That is the question. We consider it our duty to tell the truth, not only to the United States of America, but to the whole world. Whatever strong words one chooses, they will be insufficient to express the whole danger with which the deployment of weapons in space and the relocation of the arms race to space would be connected.

**Q:** Where is the guarantee that Washington won't use the negotiations as a cover for the attempt to achieve military supremacy? Won't the talks end in a dead-end?

**Gromyko:** Starting from the spirit of your question, I would like to raise yet another important question. Their plans in respect to space, for a so-called large-scale missile defense, the American side is characterizing as defensive. In Geneva they often told us, especially in the beginning of the meeting: Now imagine what a defensive plan this is! We want to create such weapons which destroy missiles which have been launched against the United States. This is defense. They say that they fear a nuclear strike from the side of the Soviet Union, therefore they need a shield.

Let's say they succeed in building a shield. They say, this shield has a peaceloving character. It's designed to destroy missiles, so that these missiles don't reach their targets. The fact that from behind this shield, missiles will be directed against another country, against the Soviet Union in some extreme situation, doesn't mean anything from their standpoint. They are trying to convince us of that. They are telling us: The United States doesn't have any intention to strike against the Soviet Union. We say: That means that the Soviet Union must rely on your conscience? On the conscience of Washington?

First of all, we are not very convinced that Washington is so reserved. Second, we tell them: Let's imagine that we change places with you, the United States, then you must reason like we, the Soviet Union. In other words, if we were striving to create such a system, would you rely on our words, on our conscience? Would such assurances be sufficient for you?

The answer is silence. The fact that the American side named this system "defensive" doesn't change anything. There is absolutely nothing defensive about it. These are offensive weapons, and the whole plan, frankly speaking, is aggressive, I repeat, aggressive. We are resolutely against it, resolutely.

# Will the Kremlin

by Rachel Douglas

European military specialists and politicians, concerned about potential Soviet military moves against Western Europe, are closely watching the situation in Poland. Moscow, they think, may use unrest resulting from the murder of the outspoken priest Jerzy Popieluszko or from impending food price hikes as a pretext to invade Poland.

Although two Soviet divisions are already stationed in Poland, a larger Soviet troop presence there would secure key routes into Western Europe.

Popieluszko's murder has already shaken both the regime and the Catholic Church in Poland and has led to an extraordinary open trial of government officials, which has been televised and covered in detail in the official press every day since Dec. 27 of last year.

The priest, kidnapped and brutally murdered near the town of Torun in October, was the victim of security police working under the Polish interior ministry. Four officers from the ministry are on trial for the killing.

The faction implicated in the priest's murder is in effect an arm of the Soviet KGB. One Italian politician, viewing the crime as a KGB operation start to finish, compared it to acts of terror that preceded the consolidation of a fascist regime in Italy during the 1920s and 1930s. The Soviets, he said, are not satisfied with the results achieved by three years of military rule in Poland. Army officers dominate in Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski's regime, which adds to Russian suspicions about "Catholic officers" who could not be counted on to do Moscow's bidding in a crisis.

## Death penalty

In October, right after Popieluszko's body was dragged from a reservoir, Internal Affairs Minister Czeslaw Kiszczak assured the people in a nationally televised broadcast that the murderers would get the death penalty. Depending on the outcome of the Torun trial, keeping this promise could mean hanging several security police officials, up to the rank of general or deputy minister.

On Oct. 30, Polish authorities detained Col. Adam Pietruszka, Capt. Grzegorz Piotrowski, and two lieutenants from