

Brezhnev takes control

As the countdown starts to the 26th Soviet Party Congress, Rachel Douglas outlines the evidence that the 'radical' faction has problems.

"We will not be in a hurry to draw final conclusions," proclaimed Moscow's *Izvestia*, "about whether [Reagan] is a dogmatic conservative . . . or a pragmatist who takes into account the realities of the modern world."

This moderate assessment of the new administration, widely repeated even in Soviet responses to Secretary of State Alexander Haig's charges that Moscow runs all world terrorism, affirmed Moscow's anticipation that the damage done Soviet-American relations under the Carter administration can be repaired. It also continued a heated foreign policy debate inside the Soviet bloc.

In preparation for the Feb. 23 opening of the 26th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, the Brezhnev leadership moved to prevent the immediate flaring of several international crises. Even the tense situation in Poland is being subordinated to Brezhnev's purpose of controlling the foreign policy decisions of the congress, as well as the leadership transition that is also at stake.

Brezhnev's practice of protecting stable relations with the West, battered during the last four years, still faces domestic challenges. An entrenched Soviet bloc tendency, encompassing a hefty KGB security agency faction and major foreign-policy think tanks, and patronized at the highest Kremlin levels by powerful Central Committee Secretaries Mikhail Suslov and Boris Ponomarev, favors confrontation and destabilization of the West.

But as the 26th Congress approached, the Brezhnev principle prevailed on several important matters.

- **Soviet-American relations:** Russians involved in making policy on the United States say currently that they expect Ronald Reagan to "turn into Nixon" respecting relations with the U.S.S.R., opening the door to renewed trade, science, and strategic arms agreements.

Following the initial acrimony of Haig's attacks on Moscow and the blunt replies issued by the official news agency TASS, the Soviet foreign ministry turned to unusual forms of open diplomacy to stress the priority of new dialogue between the superpowers. Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko released an open letter to Haig on Feb. 11, which, after refuting specific charges made by the secretary of state, concluded with a statement of "our readiness for exchange of views on a wide range of issues." Vladilen Vasev, the number-two man in the

Soviet embassy in Washington told a Cable Network News interviewer that Moscow intended to maintain "patience and restraint" and not jump to conclusions about the new administration.

Vasev's boss, ambassador to Washington Anatoly Dobrynin, returned to Moscow early in February to take part in congress preparations. There were rumors, which Dobrynin reportedly declined to put down, that the experienced America specialist—the longest serving foreign ambassador in Washington—was in for a party or government promotion.

- **Polish stabilization:** On Feb. 9, in a Soviet-backed move to stop the merry-go-round of regional strikes wreaking havoc with the Polish economy, the ruling Polish United Workers Party installed a new prime minister, Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski. As defense minister and a Politburo member, Jaruzelski opposed quashing the free trade-union movement by force; he also won a measure of Soviet confidence as a man who has been at the summit of the Polish establishment for 12 years without becoming terminally embroiled in factional warfare. For Brezhnev, banking on Jaruzelski to stabilize Poland, at least for now, was preferable to sending in Warsaw Pact forces before the Soviet party congress or soon afterwards.

Jaruzelski demanded, and won, tentative support from the Solidarity trade unions, in the form of a three-month moratorium on strikes so that Poland could have some breathing room to reverse a decline of industrial production by as much as 40 percent from 1980 levels. He upheld government compromises with the unions, but also declared a tough law-and-order stance toward the radical wing of Solidarity that created "the threat of economic chaos and fratricidal conflict" by unceasing strikes. Party chief Stanislaw Kania warned that, "if necessary, force should be used to defeat the enemies of socialism."

- **Persian Gulf proposal:** The Soviets chose the week before the congress to relaunch the proposal for an international accord on Persian Gulf security, first presented by Brezhnev during his December 1980 trip to India. In Pakistan, the Soviet ambassador attempted to start diplomatic motion on the proposal, which consti-

tuted an alternative to KGB-fostered Russian support of Islamic fundamentalist and other destabilizing forces in the Middle East.

Brezhnev's Gulf plan seeks Soviet, American, European, Japanese, and Chinese pledges to respect the sovereignty of countries in the region and the right of tankers and other ships to safe transit. It was designed as an overture the Reagan administration could act on without plunging into the intricacies of strategic arms negotiations right away.

The war party

The vehemence of Soviet bloc factional opposition to these policies has not abated. It was voiced on the eve of the conference from several quarters, but nowhere more succinctly than in the East German military publication *Volksarmee*.

Volksarmee, in a mid-February issue, not only compared West German Chancellor Schmidt's policies toward the U.S.S.R. to those of Nazi Germany but sniped at Brezhnev himself. Writing of the government of Schmidt, who together with French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing has been indispensable to every effective war-avoidance measure of the past half decade, including Brezhnev's, *Volksarmee* asserted that West Germany only "pretends to be peaceful in her official propaganda, but . . . the same economic and social-political forces are decisive now as then [before Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union]: the imperialist monopolies." In the same issue, *Volksarmee* joined the host of Anglo-Americans who dismissed Brezhnev's Persian Gulf proposal as mere rhetoric, by observing that its rejection by Washington and Bonn was inevitable because "peace and détente are incompatible with the nature of imperialism."

A host of opinion-making American publications greeted the Soviet party congress and the Reagan administration with feature articles proclaiming the onset of a Great Russian "chauvinist military tendency" in the Soviet Union, stemming from Soviet economic problems and projected social unrest and leading to an armed-camp Soviet policy posture. Conclusions based on these erroneous findings are being peddled in great number, including through channels aimed into the Reagan administration.

In the version published by retired *New York Times* Soviet desk hand Harrison Salisbury on Feb. 1, the Russian "chauvinist military tendency" is comprised of developments ranging from the circulation of anti-Semitic underground documents, to increased publication of World War II memoirs, to the belief among young officers that a surgical strike against Chinese nuclear missile installations might become appropriate. Salisbury lumped these events together under the summary statement that there is "an emergence of propaganda

elements bearing a strong resemblance with Hitler's National Socialism."

The real relationship among these developments is different.

There exists within the U.S.S.R., in the form of certain dissident organizations, underground Orthodox churches, and groups inside the Communist Party and KGB, a cultish Russian chauvinism which is receiving a great deal of attention from press circles linked to British intelligence. This cultish chauvinism is the Russian strain of "solidarism," the same "solidarism" whose jesuitical Polish variety was the instrument for creating the ideology and institution of Poland's "Solidarity" movement, to the lasting detriment of Poland as an industrial nation. The authors of the chauvinist underground propaganda so emphasized by Salisbury, worship the 19th-century mystical philosophers who founded Russian "solidarism."

These solidarists, committed to worldwide deindustrialization, are coextensive with the networks of KGB operatives—interfaced with those of British and continental European oligarchies—that constitute the Soviet involvement in international terrorism.

They are *not* cut of the same cloth as the rest of the "patriotic" mobilization Salisbury wrote about.

Aside from the thoroughly rotten, KGB-centered faction that seeks collapse and destabilization of the West, there are two other impulses in Soviet foreign policy.

One is Brezhnev's forging of economic ties and war-avoidance collaboration with Western and Third World nations. The other, encouraged by the international crisis of the Carter era, is mobilization for a world war perceived as increasingly probable.

This anticipation has been visible in what Soviet military leaders said in pre-congress discussions. "The danger of war [is] a grim reality of our time," wrote Air Force Commander-in-Chief Marshal Kutakhov in the army paper *Red Star*.

Not only the military, but some of the most sophisticated, outward-looking people in the U.S.S.R. have responded to the world economic crisis and military-strategic instability by backing a campaign to consolidate internal Soviet resources and mobilize the population for economic adversity.

Academician V. Koptuyug, head of the science and economic planning center in Novosibirsk, told the West German business daily *Handelsblatt* frankly that the promise of Western participation in Siberian development had not been realized. Neither the United States nor Japan had taken a role in it, and West German participation had shrunk to one—admittedly large—deal to exchange natural gas for a pipeline. Therefore, said Koptuyug, the Siberians were studying how to conquer their vast frontier using Soviet resources alone.