

East-West trade, or East-West war?

The Soviets bluntly warn of the danger of nuclear war, but affirm their commitment to peaceful cooperation

A battery of top-ranking Soviet leaders, including President Leonid Brezhnev and Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin, made clear with unaccustomed frankness to a delegation of visiting United States Senators in Moscow Nov. 16-20 that the Soviet Union above all desires peace and expanded trade and economic cooperation with the United States. Billions of dollars of potential orders await U.S. business from Soviet customers, emphasized Soviet parliamentarian and party Central Committee Secretary Boris Ponomarev to the Senate group.

The offers of lucrative economic cooperation were one of two alternative courses of unfolding U.S.-Soviet relations which the Soviet leaders presented to the U.S. delegation. The Senators' unprecedented contact with so many top Soviet leaders came at a tense moment in U.S.-Soviet relations, and the Soviets were equally frank in their warnings that U.S.-Soviet confrontation could lead to war and the thermonuclear destruction of the United States.

Blustering U.S. and British media and officials steered toward a "Cuban missile crisis" style confrontation over the weekend over the stationing of Soviet-made MIG 23s in Cuba, which they alleged were "nuclear attack aircraft" (see U.S. REPORT). At the same time, indications appeared that NATO might activate a contingency plan to intervene in Iran. Concurrent, large-scale naval maneuvers staged jointly by England and the U.S. in the Caribbean Sea prompted Cuba to put its armed forces on full alert the weekend of Nov. 18-19.

Speaking to the delegation, which Sen. Abraham Ribicoff (D-Conn.) headed on Nov. 17, Brezhnev gave an unusually direct personal warning. He denounced "stupid statements" made in the United States about the so-called "Soviet threat." According to Senator Thomas Eagleton (D-Mo.), who spoke to reporters after the Senators' hour-long meeting with Brezhnev ended, the Soviet leader said, "We do not seek nuclear war — we are not crazy. But if the U.S. launches a nuclear attack against us, we can destroy it."

Brezhnev met the Senators, although he had previously reserved the day exclusively for talks with Ethiopian leader Mengistu, when delegation members fueled the Cuba crisis. Ribicoff enraged Prime Minister Aleksei Kosygin during talks on Nov. 16, by

bringing up the presence of Soviet-built MIG-23 aircraft in Cuba, a story unleashed last week by the *Washington Post*. Kosygin reportedly exploded at Ribicoff, asking incredulously, "You are here to talk about strategic arms and yet you bring up something like this? These are defensive aircraft only!"

The government daily *Pravda* charged the *Washington Post* with trying to provoke "a new wave of mistrust and ill-feeling toward the Soviet Union, at a time when the talks on strategic arms limitation (SALT) are entering a decisive stage."

'We won't be the first'

Brezhnev, in fact, declared to the Senators that he was prepared to meet President Carter in any location — provided a SALT agreement is ready to be signed. The accord is 95 percent concluded, he said, but some people "stand in the way." They are those "who want to frustrate those talks or who seek an outcome to the detriment of the Soviet Union. That we can never accept."

The Soviet President reminded the Senators of the horrors of nuclear war, and again indicated that he expects something better from Jimmy Carter than from Ribicoff or the *Washington Post*. "In the U.S., any excuse is used to criticize and to attack the Soviet Union. I see this and I say go ahead, shout, say whatever you will Carter and I know we will both have a couple of dozen minutes after satellites tell us missiles are coming. We will never be the first to let such weapons fly. I will still have time to respond. There will be no more United States. But we will still get it in the neck."

Brezhnev then commented on the neutron bomb, for which President Carter has decided to produce components. He revealed that Soviet scientists had experimented with a prototype of this "enhanced radiation" warhead, but had resolved not to produce it. (NSIPS has received a new commentary from Moscow's Novosti Press Agency, in which a Soviet strategic expert definitively shows how the neutron bomb only fits a scheme for "limited nuclear war," which — as Brezhnev said — is an illusory scenario. The Novosti article appears in full below.)

On Nov. 18, Brezhnev spoke out personally again,

warning against any intervention into Iran, in an interview to *Pravda*:

Pravda: How do you assess foreign press reports on interference by Western powers, especially the USA, in the events in Iran and even the possibility of military intervention by them?

Brezhnev: Yes, there have been such reports, including reports on the possibility of military intervention by certain powers. What puts one on guard is the fact that officials of the states concerned actually do not deny such reports. If they deny attempts to interfere in Iran's internal affairs — as was done recently by the U.S. President — they right away make reservations which do not exclude the possibility of such interference under an appropriate excuse.

The Soviet Union, which maintains traditional good-neighbor relations with Iran, states resolutely that it is against any foreign interference in the internal affairs of Iran by anyone, in any form and under any pretext. The events taking place in that country constitute a purely internal affair and the questions involved in them should be decided by the Iranians themselves. All states should abide in this matter by the principles recorded in the UN Charter and in a number of other basic international documents, should respect the sovereignty and independence of Iran and the Iranian people.

It must be also clear that any interference, especially military interference in the affairs of Iran — a state which directly borders on the Soviet Union — would be regarded by the USSR as a matter affecting its security interests.

Warn of 'China Card'

In addition to his remarks on trade, Ponomarev assured the Senators that the USSR would view the normalization of U.S.-Chinese relations as "a perfectly normal process," if it were not the case that "such moves are accompanied by U.S. actions which push China toward war preparations and armed adventures which could start a new world war."

Ponomarev had in mind the approach known as "the China card," which is the favorite tack of Zbigniew Brzezinski and James Schlesinger in the Carter administration and of London strategists. A similarly phrased statement of policy by Soviet American specialist Georgii Arbatov, interviewed last week for publication in the *Sunday Observer* of London, sent British Kremlinologists like Edward Crankshaw into apoplexy. Ignoring the fact that Arbatov, like Ponomarev, left the door open to a non-military rapprochement of Western nations with China, Crankshaw declared that the Arbatov interview could only presage "concessions" still to come from Moscow.

The London *Economist* institutionalized this latest twisted analysis of Soviet policy, with a Nov. 18 cover story titled "China Plus the West Equals Rattled Russia." It is a calculated lie, which we may expect to see all over our American newspapers in coming days, to explain away the further collapse of Soviet-American detente and to cover up the Soviets' growing entente with continental Western European leaders and their deep concern over the blindness, stupidity, and malice that hold sway in the various sections of the U.S. administration.

— Rachel Berthoff

Soviets to U.S.: 'Let's do business'

Wouldn't the United States be better off investing in high-technology energy industries than in arms? The Soviet government daily *Izvestia's* senior commentator V. Matveev cited a study by physicist Edward Teller to answer that question in the affirmative, in a commentary Nov. 18. Teller had said that \$90 billion annually would be an appropriate energy budget, and Matveev suggested that this could potentially come from the resources currently sunk into weapons.

Matveev views Atommash, the pioneering Soviet plant for manu-

facture of nuclear reactors for export, as a paradigm for what the U.S. economy could be doing.

The *Izvestia* piece is part of a package of material being released from Moscow on the potential growth of U.S. exports in general, and particularly East-West trade. TASS reported Nov. 14 that the Canada-USA Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences has published a new booklet entitled "USSR-USA: Realities, Problems and Prospects." It documents how U.S. industry has lost at least \$2 billion (Soviet officials have cited higher figures since the booklet was written) in socialist sector orders, which "the authors of the booklet note. . . were switched to firms in the Federal Republic of Germany, France and Italy."

Yevgenii Shershnev, co-author of

the booklet with Rademir Bogdanov, is a long-time student of U.S. corporate leaderships. According to Richard Barnet, the Institute for Policy Studies founder, Shershnev shocked Barnet by offering the opinion that leaders of what is dubbed the "military-industrial complex" would be highly interested in conversion to civilian industrial production. Barnet reveals in his book *The Giants*, that he was unsettled to find a leading Soviet "American expert" who regarded the ballyhooed "military-industrial complex" as a myth, and who anticipated that U.S.-Soviet detente could be solidly grounded in economic cooperation, at the expense of the adversary relationship nurtured between the two nations since the Cold War era.