

STRATEGIC POLICY

Detente under Soviet debate

by Rachel Douglas

Now that Jimmy Carter has been renominated, the prevention of nuclear world war depends on how much the Soviet leadership believes European leaders can defuse the danger of war. Yet the ties forged by Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev with the nations of continental Western Europe are facing their most serious test.

The destabilization of Poland could destroy what remains of Brezhnev's détente policy. The announcement of Presidential Directive 59, a codification of "counterforce" and "limited nuclear war" as the strategic doctrine of the United States—for itself and NATO—further undermines the Europeans' independence of action to prevent war.

The Soviet response to these and other developments includes attacks on the Carter administration as a gang of "nuclear maniacs." Such attacks are now appearing daily in the pages of *Pravda*. The responsible politician will note that Moscow has issued more urgent and severe judgments about Washington now than at any time in the past four years. And the Soviets have said in advance that a victory for Ronald Reagan or another presidential term for Jimmy Carter would be equally dangerous in their view.

But that is not all.

The mainstay of Leonid Brezhnev's détente policy is a series of treaty agreements and a process of dialogue between the U.S.S.R. and the nations of continental Western Europe. Now, at the same time that those ties are jeopardized by the shaking of Poland, their value is being questioned from inside the Soviet policymaking establishment.

When the Soviet Union dispatched troops into Afghanistan at the start of the year, *EIR* reported that that military move was part of a profound shift in the Soviet strategic posture from a policy of war-avoidance to a war-fighting footing.

We explained Soviet thinking in terms of a cumulative response to Western, particularly American, policies. Those policies center on three efforts.

First, encirclement of the U.S.S.R. along an "arc of

instability" where the Afghanistan-Iran-Pakistan complex and an increasingly United States-allied China were milestones.

Second, institution of "limited nuclear war" strategy for the European continent, through the December 1979 NATO weapons and strategy resolution designed to tie the Europeans to this approach.

Third, the economic collapse, interpreted by many Moscow analysts as an irreversible decline which would prod Western leaders into desperate foreign-policy adventures, by analogy with the Soviet view that depressions have precipitated military conflicts throughout the 20th century.

"To restore even a modicum of détente," we said, "much less open the door to economic cooperation which could bring long-term stability, will require not only strenuous efforts from Western Europe, but a decisive change in the foreign policy of the United States away from those actions which encourage the U.S.S.R. to expect nuclear war in the very near future."

The Carter administration has kept right on the track that led to the international crisis, but the Europeans made initiatives to save détente. French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of West Germany each arranged to meet Brezhnev in person, and each meeting yielded results: steps toward political consultations to settle the Afghanistan crisis and reopening arms talks on which the December NATO package had slammed the door.

The relative vitality of the Europeans' détente attempts reverberated in Moscow to the advantage of those foreign-policy specialists whose conception of East-West cooperation is the most sophisticated and potentially beneficial to the West.

Among them are economists who favor Soviet support for rebuilding a gold-based international monetary system, presumably starting with the European Monetary System of Schmidt and Giscard as the kernel.

This group believes that international monetary stability, leading to a revival of trade and industrial development efforts, is a precondition for defusing the threat of war, and its views have gained press access repeatedly in recent months.

Nevertheless, Europeans fear that an explosion in Poland could torpedo their confidence-building measures once and for all. Chancellor Schmidt has voiced this concern. French columnist Paul-Marie de la Gorce, known for his familiarity with French government views, wrote Aug. 12 of the current Polish unrest and its possible international consequences:

"One should not minimize the shifts in Poland, but one cannot exaggerate them either. Their present and future limits are determined by realities it would be mad to ignore"—the security perimeter of the Warsaw Pact.