

Vatican by Augustinus

Is the Ostpolitik on the outs?

Unprecedented snubs to Cardinal Casaroli combined with praise for space science and technology may herald a turn.

It's too early to draw any conclusions—especially by notoriously slow Vatican timetables—but there are hints that the Church of Rome may shift away from the accommodation to the Kremlin identified with the *Ostpolitik* of the Holy See's Secretary of State, Agostino Casaroli. Most intriguing is that the hints coincide with renewed endorsement by the Pope of the principle of technological development—exactly what the *Ostpolitik* deal is intended to block in the West.

"A tougher international policy, both by the United States and by the Church, is the only thing that can exert sufficient pressure on the U.S.S.R. to induce it to milder counsels," stated the director of *Aggiornamenti Sociali*, the Jesuit Father Angelo Macchi, who happens to be in the United States to follow the presidential elections. This intervention, classified by the Communist Party press as "inspired from above," has been the most explicit point in the polemic which, according to authoritative sources, is raging in the Vatican. Father Macchi openly scores Secretary of State Casaroli and his "*Ostpolitik*": "Twenty years of work have produced something, but more appearance than substance."

Meanwhile, two incidents took place which are unprecedented in Vatican diplomacy: Twice in the last few weeks Casaroli was censored by Vatican information outlets. The first was in Canada during a speech the Pope gave at the meeting of the Empire

Club. On that occasion Casaroli repeated his "open door" policy toward the East bloc countries. "The question of our time," he said, "is to avoid overly theoretical and simplistic criteria," instead favoring "a dialogue open to all and with the most balanced judgment." The speech was not distributed to journalists.

The second case took place in Italy, on the occasion of a memorial for Pope Paul VI in Brescia on Sept. 26. Casaroli in his eulogy presented Paul VI as the Pope of Dialogue who "by opening wide the door which had been opened a crack by his own serenely brave predecessor, re-knit the contacts with the world of the countries of real socialism." The text of this speech, given out to the press minutes before the Vatican press office closed, when all the journalists had already left, was not published by *Osservatore Romano*, which is under the direction of the State Secretariat.

It was already well known, from the time of Moscow's refusal to grant the permit for a visit to Lithuania by the Pope or his representative in the person of Casaroli, that the *Ostpolitik* of the Vatican "foreign minister" was in crisis; but even more interesting is the fact that at the same time, John Paul II personally put on the table the need for technological development, and more specifically research in space.

In a recent speech to the Pontifical Academy of Science, the Pope under-

lined the importance of using space and praised space technology. "Great scientists like Kepler and Newton explored the heavens with the spirit of the believer. Poets and philosophers like Pascal contemplated the mysterious silences of the universe with reverential fear," the Pope said. After lauding the development of space stations and satellites, he recalled the origin of man's presence in space, the grandiose Apollo project for a manned Moon landing initiated by U.S. President John F. Kennedy, and said: "I regard the presence of man and his machines in space with the same wonderment as Paul VI at the time of the Apollo 13, when he invited the participants in the week of studies on 'nuclei of the galaxy' to render homage to those who, with their studies, with their action, and their authority, have once again demonstrated to the world the unlimited power of science and modern technology."

"With us you will also raise a fervent hymn of gratitude to God, the Creator of the Universe and Father of humanity, who by such paths, too, desires to be sought and discovered by man, and adored and loved by him."

The Pope recalled the significant role carried out in this field by two great scientists, Guglielmo Marconi, in the development of telecommunications technology, and Prof. Giuseppe Colombo, who gave a great impulse to the development of a new conception of satellites and who was also a founding member of the Club of Life, established in 1982 by Helga Zepp-LaRouche to fight worldwide for the principles of life and scientific progress. John Paul II concluded by stressing the importance of modern space technology for the development of agriculture and for the fight against hunger, and the use of satellites to spread culture to every part of the world.