

Supreme Soviet tells U.S. Congress how to cut defense

by Criton Zoakos and Nora Hamerman

Knowledgeable observers in Washington, D.C. believe that the "new arms control proposal" fielded by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov in mid-January was mainly crafted as a lever of political intervention into the United States Congress which has little to do with arms control negotiations per se.

The same sources point out that congressional leaders were briefed about this proposal in a special session at the Soviet embassy in Washington, 24 hours before it was officially released to the U.S. government.

The chief feature of the Gorbachov proposal is its so-called Stage One of a plan for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000. This is identical to the proposals made by the Soviets last year at Geneva, and rejected, for good reasons, by *both* the Reagan administration and its liberal critics.

Now the same proposal has been refurbished and returned with the appendages of a "Stage Two" and a "Stage Three," which are purely of cosmetic and political-propaganda value.

The three stages

The guts of the proposal are as follows. Gorbachov proposed to eliminate all nuclear weapons, by the year 2000, in three stages:

1) Within the next five to eight years, the Soviet Union and the United States should agree to reduce nuclear arms that can reach the other's territory by 50%. On the remaining delivery vehicles of this category, no more than 6,000 warheads are to be retained. The Russians are ready to do this—but only if the United States renounces "the development, testing, and deployment of space strike weapons." The U.S. and U.S.S.R. should also agree to eliminate intermediate range missiles from Europe, both ballistic and cruise missiles, as a first step to ridding the continent of all nuclear weapons.

2) Between 1990 and 1995-97, other nuclear powers will begin disarmament, by freezing nuclear arms and withdrawing any nuclear arms stationed in foreign territories. Following the completion, in the U.S.S.R. and U.S.A., of the 50% reduction in their relevant strategic arms, another radical step will be taken: All nuclear powers will also eliminate their tactical nuclear arms.

3) Beginning no later than 1995, through 1999, remaining nuclear weapons will be eliminated. A universal accord will be drawn up pledging all parties never again to build a nuclear weapon.

During the 1985 negotiations in Geneva, the Russians presented an arms-control offer to the United States that is identical to what the Russians now call "stage one." The Reagan administration rejected it, for excellent reasons: Given the asymmetry in the two nations' nuclear arsenals, the proposal for a 50% reduction in ICBMs, etc. by both sides, would leave the Soviets with an even more massive relative superiority in land-based strategic weapons than they now possess.

Confirming the evaluation of the Washington observers cited above, is the following series of events that took place in Washington.

On Jan. 15, the Soviet news agency TASS gave details of the Gorbachov proposal. Two days later, on Jan. 17, the former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, William Colby told assembled press that he, in his capacity as a board member of an anti-SDI group called the Committee for National Security, enthusiastically supports Gorbachov's dreamy cornucopia of a world free of all nuclear weapons by the year 2000. What Gorbachov proposed was "on our wish list," said the former CIA chief, "a singular opportunity to change the world." To the applause of representatives of every anti-SDI organization in town (SANE, Nuclear Freeze, etc.), he con-

cluded: "For the United States, the price is Star Wars. . . . We are not giving up anything but the President's dream."

One day later, on Jan. 18, in Moscow, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, encouraged by Colby's cue, told more than 300 members of the foreign press and diplomatic corps of his burning desire as a Russian man-of-arms to see all nuclear arms destroyed by the year 2000. The only U.S. government official attacked at that news conference was Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger.

Supreme Soviet commands . . .

On that same day, the Supreme Soviet issued a 10-page letter addressed not to the administration, but to the U.S. Congress, "explaining" Gorbachov's dreamy vision, and asking the Congressmen to "raise their voices . . . in favor of the introduction of a bilateral Soviet-American moratorium on any nuclear explosions"—notably including those necessary to research and testing of SDI technology. As administration officials later complained, the Russians had thus given Congress details of Gorbachov's proposal before any were made available to the administration.

One day later, on Jan. 19, two days before Congress actually reconvened to consider the agenda the Russians had set for it, House Majority Leader Jim Wright (D-Tex.) proclaimed the Gorbachov plan a "useful tool" for cutting the U.S. defense budget (See *Congressional Closeup*, pp. 68-69).

Thus, Gorbachov's proposal is perfectly clear, and was perfectly clear even before William Colby had completed his endorsement of Gorbachov's dream against "the President's dream." Gorbachov's proposal is a well-conceived political-propaganda initiative, designed to build a movement in the West to bring massive new pressure to bear against the U.S. defense budget and the Strategic Defense Initiative. With the Gramm-Rudman bill now in place to force massive budget cuts on Congress and the administration, Gorbachov has simply proposed to maximize the pressure to concentrate those budget cuts in the area of defense, SDI in particular.

The timing was obvious. Gorbachov's proposal came only three days after the Gramm-Rudman "balanced budget" abomination mandated that an additional \$5.8 billion be cut from the current year's U.S. defense budget, representing a net reduction in U.S. defense spending for the first time since 1973, when Henry Kissinger and William Colby held office in the Nixon-Ford administration.

The real defense spending scandal

Make no mistake, current U.S. defense spending, after President Reagan's "arms buildup," is pathetically inadequate to the threat now posed by the Soviets. Even Reagan's first administration, despite the heroic efforts of Caspar Weinberger, spent less on defense after inflation than the prodismament Carter administration. During the same period, the Soviet Union steadily accelerated its defense spending,

to the point that it is estimated today at 5 to 10 times the U.S. figure. The Russians are known to spend \$300 billion annually just on the production of military equipment and weapons, compared to America's \$50 billion—one-sixth the Soviet amount.

In recent years, the Russians developed and, in 1985, deployed three new types of ICBMs, SS-25, SS-26, and SS-27—all prohibited by the SALT agreements.

The SS-27 is the largest military engine in human history, and just before his new proposal, Gorbachov deployed 45 of the monsters, perhaps up to 100, each carrying an unknown number of warheads. (The second-largest Soviet missile, the huge SS-18, carries up to 30 warheads.)

Such action, in blatant disregard and contempt of arms-control agreements, is the best guide to interpretation of Gorbachov's latest offer. Its sole purpose is to give propaganda ammunition to the reckless crew of budget cutters in the Congress, who would disarm the country and throw it at Moscow's feet, as that proves necessary to maintain service on the Treasury's domestic and foreign debt, the real mandate of Gramm-Rudman.

'Moscow feels no urgency'

In March 1985, Kremlin "Americanologist" Georgii Arbatov stated on Soviet television that pressures to reduce the U.S. defense budget would be the means by which to realize all Soviet objectives in "arms control." In mid-January this year, a Soviet official acknowledged to the *Wall Street Journal*: "Gramm-Rudman is a process we are watching very carefully."

"Moscow feels no urgency," commented the *Journal's* reporter. "The Soviets believe U.S. domestic politics and budget-cutting will work in their favor."

And indeed, no sooner had Jim Wright, House Majority Leader and probable successor to Speaker Tip O'Neill, proclaimed Gorbachov's offer a "useful tool," than other lawmakers endorsed his attitude. Rep. Pat Shroeder (D-Colo.) of the House Armed Services Committee, who was Gary Hart's 1984 campaign co-chairman, told a reporter Jan. 20: "Jim Wright is absolutely right. The administration is going to have to accept deep cuts in defense. Why? Two reasons: First, Gramm-Rudman, Gramm-Rudman, Gramm-Rudman. Second, Gramm-Rudman, Gramm-Rudman, Gramm-Rudman."

Tom Downey (D-N.Y.) told a reporter on Jan. 21: "I would agree with Wright completely. The budget argument is a good argument to make" in favor of accepting Gorbachov's proposal. "Congress won't let the [the administration] wriggle out of it [Gramm-Rudman]."

Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole is cooking up an "alternative" to the administration's proposed 3% increase in defense spending: Dole will demand a \$20 billion cut in defense, a like amount in domestic programs, along with a \$20 billion tax hike.