

Soviets Lay Cards On Table: Will Win War If Provoked

NATO deployment of the antipersonnel "neutron bomb" in Western Europe with the thought of using it for "limited" tactical nuclear warfare would be "senseless," Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin told a visiting West German delegation last week, since "the densely populated European continent would be extinguished in a nuclear war." Kosygin's warning to the delegation, headed by Bavarian Minister President Goppel of the right-wing Christian Social Union (CSU), was a stunning rejoinder to recent CSU rantings that World War II is not yet over.

The Soviet Premier's bluntness on this score coheres with a growing Soviet appreciation that the best way to win peace is to pull no punches in outlining their military-strategic doctrine. By laying their policy on the table, the Soviets are providing the clearest possible context for genuine detente with the United States and Western Europe. This is an opportunity which, they have noted repeatedly in the recent period, must not be squandered.

Last week's celebrations in Moscow of the 60th anniversary of the Red Army occasioned a similar volley of high-level warnings. The Soviets are not simply focusing on the neutron bomb issue per se, they are preparing for the consequences of the serious deterioration in the international political situation, of the destabilization of progressive Western governments and Third World hotspots. (For Soviet moves in cooling down the Horn of Africa, see Mideast Section).

Defense Minister Dimitri Ustinov in a speech reported in a page and a half in *Pravda* Feb. 23 deliberately drew the strategic lessons of World War II: "Our victory was a terrible warning to imperialist reaction, a stern lesson of history to those who try to review or revise the results of the last war, to all those who like to play with fire." The Soviet people are not "sabre rattlers," Ustinov said, but nobody should mistake their peace policy for a "policy of weakness."

In tandem with a hardening defense line, the Soviet leadership has let it be known that it has not closed the door on a policy of war-avoidance and detente. In a Feb. 24 speech to the Supreme Soviet (see excerpts below), President Brezhnev sharply attacked the U.S. for throwing up "all kinds of obstacles" to improving U.S.-Soviet relations, but made it clear that the Soviet Union remains open to reach an agreement on such issues as SALT, scientific cooperation, and trade.

This coheres with an ongoing Soviet "probing" of the U.S. scientific community by eminent Soviet scientists such as Nikolai Basov to establish cooperation in the area of nuclear physics. Brezhnev in his speech called on "responsible U.S. figures" to "realize, how much, as

they say, is at stake."

Warwinning Military Strategy

The mood in Moscow today is clearly not one of optimism, as the military speeches attest. Deputy Defense Minister Sergei Sokolov, who last week was promoted to Marshal of the Soviet Union, made an unusually blunt statement in the military daily *Red Star*, that the Soviets intended to win a nuclear war, if forced to fight one: "Proceeding from the assumption that the security of our country — and in case the imperialists unleash war, the victory — is guaranteed by the efforts of all components of our military organization, the state, the Party and Central Committee harmoniously care for all the branches of the Armed Forces."

In his speech on Armed Forces Day, Marshal Ustinov made a rare public mention of Josef Stalin, and the applause this elicited from the crowd has been widely noted in the press as indicative of the new hard line. The dominant theme of Ustinov's address was that the military and political leadership of the Soviet Union are completely united — particularly so in times of crisis like World War II. Thus, it is no coincidence that Marshal Brezhnev was awarded the highest Soviet military honor, the "Order of Victory" during the celebration. Ustinov explained that the "defense might of the Soviet Armed Forces, and the name of Leonid Ilich Brezhnev are inseparable."

Ustinov further stressed that scientific and technological progress is the foundation of the armed forces and has been so for 60 years. There can be no stagnation in this regard, he said: "This is the essence of the dialectics of military science."

On Feb. 28, *Pravda's* V. Korionov, in a commentary entitled "Why Are They Muddying the Waters?," reiterated Soviet urgings that SALT, the cornerstone of bilateral relations, must be taken seriously. Korionov wrote that, despite the opposition of the enemies of SALT, talks are in an active stage and both sides are asserting their resolve to solve the problem in the not-too-distant future. However, "somebody or other in the USA would clearly like to tie the hands of the Washington Administration," wrote Korionov. He then pointed to a recent column by British press agent Jack Anderson who wrote that the Soviet Union wants a "test of strength" in the Horn of Africa.

On March 1, the government paper *Izvestia* took aim at Brzezinski's attempts to destroy SALT by linking SALT and the Horn of Africa. Some people, wrote *Izvestia*, "would like to make the resolution of the most important fundamental tasks dependent on some local situation or other."