

pointblank: "Do you want me to remain as Chancellor or not?"

With rapport established between Schmidt and Reagan, Haig was temporarily reined in. He went so far as to chastise his own State Department for officials' high-handed treatment of the West German leader. In a press conference Jan. 6, Haig admitted that "as was sharply pointed out to us, some of the differences" allegedly existing between Reagan and Schmidt, according to U.S. press accounts, "did not really exist at all." The source of these speculations, Haig admitted, was "over-eager" State Department officials.

But at his Brussels press conference Jan. 11, Haig was on the warpath again, demanding "action! action!" and calling for the allies to go along with his sanctions. Responding to a journalist who suggested that there was a double standard in criticizing the Polish military takeover but not that in Turkey, Haig replied: "Isn't it time that our Western critics stop their double standard and isn't it time to give greater weight to the precious freedoms and values with all their failings and stop this masochistic tearing down of our values?" Haig complained that "some still do not understand what is happening in Nicaragua or what is at stake in El Salvador."

With such incoherence coming from the State Department, it is no wonder that European observers are reminded of the years of "incalculability" under the Carter administration. In fact, Alexander Haig's position is indistinguishable from that of Carter's national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski. Brzezinski, in recent speeches and interviews, has forecast the imminent demise of the "Russian empire" and has called on the West to tear up the postwar Yalta treaty if the Soviets invade Poland.

EIR asked leading strategic analysts in Great Britain and the United States to comment on these issues, and found an unusual degree of unanimity against the Haig-Brzezinski approach. These experts perceived that the new institutionalization of military power in the East bloc is a shift with far-reaching implications for the future of the Western alliance.

The British experts responded with dismay to Brzezinski's suggestion that the Yalta treaty be torn up. "This is very dangerous" said Dr. Kavan of the University of Sussex. "It would only make the Soviets tougher, more paranoid. You can't forward the process of the internal disintegration from the outside, it can't be done. If you try, just the opposite will happen . . . the bulk of the people will rally behind the government."

John Erickson, a top expert on the Soviet armed forces at the University of Edinburgh, warned that any Western attempt to "unravel" the East bloc would backfire and create "a unilateralist, neutralist Europe," raising the "can of worms" of German reunification.

Interviews

'Ripping up Yalta would be folly'

Mark Burdman of EIR's Wiesbaden bureau spoke to John Erickson, Soviet expert at the University of Edinburgh, on Jan. 7. Erickson had recently returned from a three-week trip to Poland.

Q: I am interested in your assessment of the recent statements by Mitterrand and Brzezinski, as well as in various European press editorials, calling for consideration of the cancellation of the Yalta accords because of the latest situation in Poland. . . .

A: In the first place, this kind of idea represents a gross misunderstanding of Yalta. If people bothered to look at Yalta, the first thing they would realize is that the West gave nothing away, because it had nothing to give. It's about time that myth were squashed. Yalta is very complicated as it applies to Poland, and by coincidence I have just been studying this very problem. As it turns out, there is a case to reconstitute Yalta as it applies to the original arrangements after the war around Poland. This would mean going back to the three-party system: a communist party, a democratic party, and a peasant party. . . . What I am getting at is that it is absolutely necessary to talk historically correctly about Yalta. No one's bothered to read the Yalta accords vis-a-vis Poland. As for the Yalta accords as a whole, it's simply idiotic to talk about cancelling them: think what that would mean in terms of Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia. You'd have to start getting involved in all these situations; it's preposterous. Instead, we should insist on the precedent for reaffirmation of the Polish constitution, which, after all, Jaruzelski has agreed to live up to.

Q: What Mitterrand and Brzezinski seem to have in mind is that the East bloc is beginning to unravel, supposedly as revealed by the Polish situation, and now is the time to turn on the screws. . . .

A: If you say the East bloc is unravelling, what about the Western bloc, is it unravelling too then? Look at what Poland has done to NATO—a hell of a lot! If you push the unravelling of the East, the West will unravel too. You would then be faced with a unilateralist, neutralist Europe, which is a terribly dangerous game to play. It's

really disguised rollback, that's all it is. These chaps should think for five minutes. You would then resurrect the German problem; people would start demanding German reunification. In American terms, this is opening a can of worms.

Q: Well, Mitterrand seems to have no objections to unravelling his own country, France, so why not the entire West?

A: Exactly, that's his way of thinking. But I'm surprised Brzezinski should be playing around with this kind of idea; I would have thought he'd know better. It just shows you the bankruptcy of Western contingency planning.

Q: Schmidt and the Vatican in combination reflect a different kind of impulse. They seem to think that the economic recession/depression faced by the West, and the danger of war should be linked, as well as that Jaruzelski represents the best option for Poland, in that he represents a barrier to the coming into power of types like Grabski, Olszowski, etc. What do you think of that?

A: It's wrong to think about anybody replacing Jaruzelski. This is 1926 all over again. Remember the Pilsudski coup of that time, and that the army stayed in Poland in power for 13 years. The army is there to stay. This was admitted to me by a senior Communist Party member; he brought up the Pilsudski coup precedent.

Q: What effect will this have on the Soviet army itself?

A: The lesson will not be lost on the Soviet army. In this sense, Schmidt is right about Jaruzelski, in terms that the Polish situation is not a case of high-handed Soviet intervention, but a combination of nationalism and militarism. The party is not in control. The Polish Communist Party doesn't exist any more. After all, it was not Solidarity that marched on the Party; it was the army that marched on the Party.

Q: What does this mean for types like Olszowski, Grabski, etc.?

A: Watch for how the Politburo is reconstituted. It will be 50 percent Olszowski-Grabski and 50 percent Kubiak, so they won't be so important. This only reinforces a point I've tried to make. If there is a nerve the West should press on, it's the Polish constitution. Jaruzelski says he is committed to it, force him to get back to it.

Q: I want to get back to the Soviet army and its view of the Polish situation. Will there be a rise in the influence of the Soviet army internally in the U.S.S.R. as the succession crisis advances?

A: The Soviet army will take a leaf out of the Polish book. They'll demand over the next couple of decades a greater managerial role. That's the key thing, in term of

the internal Soviet situation. They'll do a lot of talking about how they're the repository of national virtue, national discipline.

Q: Figures like Ustinov will be important?

A: Forget about Ustinov, he won't last. The key person to look to is Ogarkov. He represents a phenomenon of a group of officers coming to the fore. He's developing very close ties with the Brezhnev personal secretariat. This group of officers is cultivating contacts outside with the Soviet elite. The Soviet military holds the balance of power in the coming period in the Soviet Union. They're going to make very strong claims, insistence on managerial pre-eminence. You'll see too, as long as the succession struggle lasts, an insistence by the military on the maintenance of very strong propaganda about the live danger from imperialism, and so on. The army too will have to build bridges.

Q: Toward people, then, like Suslov?

A: I don't give a damn about Suslov; he's not important. The people who matter are the Secretariats, the Central Committee, and the Politburo. The army is building strong ties to the Brezhnev personal secretariat, to the International Communist Secretariat, and to the defense industries secretariat. Also watch for the army to build contacts in the regions, as the regional situations become more fluid as the succession crisis advances. What I am talking about is a group that is 45-52 in age, with commanders who are about 54, all of whom went to the same academies, and who built very strong personal links over the years. What is happening now is much more to-ing and fro-ing of the Central Committee people and the military leadership than ever before. It's unprecedented. I just spoke to a very senior man in the Soviet power structure who moves in and out of Ogarkov's office. This is an entirely new thing, and it shows that the Soviet military is building bridges to build up its position as an institution as the succession crisis develops.

EIR's Mark Burdman interviewed Dr. Z. Kavan, International Relations lecturer in East-West Affairs at the University of Sussex, England, on Jan. 7. Kavan is an émigré from Czechoslovakia.

Q: What do you see as the effects of the Polish events on the rest of the East bloc, and on the U.S.S.R. itself?

A: The Polish events, it has turned out, represent an exception within the bloc. Solidarity as a phenomenon is unique to Poland. It has to do with the state of the economy there and related things. It's just a pipedream to see the Polish model spreading throughout the bloc. As in the aftermath of '56 in Hungary and '68 in Czechoslovakia, we see things moving in the other direction, the Russians moving to pull things together.



At Yalta in February 1945.

One would have expected Czechoslovakia perhaps to be the most open toward the Polish model, given the fact that there the population is relatively most discontented with the government, after the harsh crackdowns following 1968. But, interestingly enough, the Czechs seem instead to be saying only that the Poles are up to their usual thing. The Czech citizen, the worker there, seems to feel that the Poles should just get back to work. Only in dissident circles does there seem to be any real sympathy for Solidarity. The case of the DDR is like that of the Czechs. Hungary is somewhat different, in the sense that the trade unions there expressed a desire to open contacts with Solidarity.

But the Hungarians are going through a consumer

phase. Unless the economy were to worsen, the Hungarians won't be open to the Polish example.

Q: Your view is not shared by groups like the Committee for the Free World, which think that now is the time to really move from the outside to encourage the so-called disintegration of the Soviet empire, or like other prominent individuals who are calling for the effective abrogation or cancellation of Yalta. What do you think of this latter idea?

A: It's very dangerous, it's the kind of reaction that has been tried verbally with very unpleasant results. A cancellation of Yalta or anything like that would hurt international security. It would only make the Soviets tough-

er, more paranoid. You can't forward the process of the internal disintegration from the outside, it can't be done. If you try, just the opposite will happen. The illustration I use in this case is that of the average Russian citizen. He has very little inherent notion of dissidence; little of this existing among the ordinary people. There is a much greater tendency to conformity than one is likely to believe. The average Russian looks at his relation to the power structure very differently than, say, the American does. It's quite the opposite. If you try to forward disintegration in the U.S.S.R., the bulk of the people will rally in loyalty behind the government.

Q: Are you saying, then, that changes in the East bloc can only be effected through something like détente?

A: If we understand the essential point that the management of crises must be clear to both sides. The problem with détente as until now practiced is that there has been an unclear demarcation between internal and external policies. There must be a clear demarcation.

Q: Would you say this is a viewpoint shared by Lord Carrington?

A: I think he is sympathetic to this way of looking at things. What is needed is an overall system to apply to the globe as a whole. A system of trade-offs, a system of rules. Each side must know what must be avoided, what is the area in which it can maneuver, how much give and take there is. . . .

Q: How would such a system apply, say, to the Middle East?

A: I'm not familiar with that area, so let's instead look at Europe. First, each side must agree not to move over the agreed-upon demarcation line. Second, each side must agree not to try to pull out members of the other side's bloc from within the bloc, to make such an attempt to do so. Third, there must be no interference into the internal bloc of the other. Sanctions should only be applied in circumstances where there is a clear crossing of the boundaries: for example, if the Russians should put pressure on Austria around the question of Soviet émigrés, or if the West should demand that there be a change in the government structure of Poland to repay debts to the West. In this case, the Russians could legitimately look for ways to apply sanctions.

The key idea is that détente involves not a solution to global problems, but management of the global conflict. That's the main idea.

Q: In specifics, how do you see the events in Poland unfolding?

A: The chances of Solidarity re-emerging as a major force are very slim. A massive purge of the party will ensue, as massive as that in Czechoslovakia following

1968, in which one-third of the membership was forced out. The Polish CP will shed its reformist, liberal wing. The military regime will stay in power for much longer than one would naively assume, longer than a few weeks, much longer than that. The Poles will wait for another round, but I don't see that next round coming for another 5 to 6 years.

Q: And in the meantime, the idea of the West trying to put the screws on Moscow must be avoided. . . . ?

A: The more the West pressures, the more there will be a battering down of the hatches in the U.S.S.R. and the Russian military will come to play a much more active role in the policies of the country.

The following discussion with a high-level American NATO-linked source was made available to EIR on Jan. 13:

Q: What will be the impact of a military takeover that brushes aside the party? Does it not imply similar dynamics for the rest of the Soviet bloc, starting with the Soviet Union itself?

A: That's what I have been saying for quite a while. The number one question in the Soviet Union itself is not the role of the party in government or in managing the economy. The key aspect is this: the most experienced, the most educated people are the military. They are the most energetic, the most talented ones. So I am not talking in term of a "coup," this is an improper term, but of something already rolling on, a sub-surface "coup"—in fact the military already has three of its men on the Politburo. I expect that for the next five years, the military establishment will come to play a very great role in the governance of the Soviet Union. They have the competence, and that will consolidate the Russian minority of the population, because the army is totally dominated by the Russians. Look at Poland: what I expect in the Soviet Union is being played there, less well-managed and on a smaller scale.

Q: Will the new rulers not have to brush aside all the "pluralistic" policies that first powerfully emerged under Malenkov and Khrushchev?

A: Oh, they sure will, the "Libermanites" and the Gvishiani types are already being downgraded by their own impotence, their own inability. What we're looking at is a new breed of highly-competent, management-oriented young officers. . . .

Q: Tough young colonels, then?

A: That's exactly what I mean. Now the foreign policy implications are totally unclear. Are they going to turn inwards, and repair the damage of the last ten years, or outward, to mask the damage with adventures?