

## Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

### A Kalashnikov points at Kohl's chest

*Gorbachov's ultimatum contained a time-limit—corresponding nicely with the German national elections.*

The trip of Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher to Moscow (July 20-23) brought more clarity on what Mikhail Gorbachov's concrete plans for Germany are. The treatment the Soviet leader gave the German politician was very rude and "imperial."

Gorbachov is obviously losing his patience with the appeasers in Bonn around Genscher. He has decided to revive the strategy of brinkmanship against the West Germans, which one of his Soviet predecessors, Nikita Khrushchov, used between 1958 and 1962.

When Genscher met with Gorbachov for three hours on July 21, the Soviet leader did not mince words, but talked tough with the German politician: "We do not like the defense policy of your government." Gorbachov said that Bonn's attitude on arms control was not convincing: "A look at the world of today and the role the Federal Republic of Germany plays does not permit the practical support the government in Bonn gives to the militant course of the U.S. administration."

While he was talking, the Soviet leader pounded his hand on the table just the way his predecessor Khrushchov did whenever he met with politicians from the West. Gorbachov told Genscher that the Soviet Union would "not accept the participation of German companies in the SDI," and reminded the Germans bluntly that the threat of nuclear war was always over their heads. He said that nuclear war could break out at any time, even against Bonn's will, as long as U.S.

nuclear weapons were stationed in West Germany.

The Soviet leader made extensive use of the propaganda phrase "a common roof for all Europeans," to explain to Genscher that Bonn's current policy did "not comply with the necessity to live in peace with all its neighbors in Europe."

After the stick, the carrot was pulled out: Should Genscher and Chancellor Helmut Kohl succeed in talking President Reagan into acceptance of the Gorbachov proposals for arms control, an improvement of German-Soviet relations was certain. Should the Germans fail to use their influence on the Americans, however, relations between Moscow and Bonn would take a turn for the worse—were that possible. Gorbachov set the end of 1986 as a time limit for a clear German decision.

Posed with this ultimatum, Genscher kissed the Russian czar's feet. He hurried to point out that his own ministry's staff was already compiling a positive memorandum on the Gorbachov proposals for the U.S. administration. He said that although West Germany was a member of NATO, the German role was a very specific one, defined by its close geographic position to the Warsaw Pact. More than any other NATO country, Germany was concerned about dialogue and détente in Europe between East and West. Genscher added: "We in Bonn have no scruples against using the Soviet phrase of 'a common roof for all Europeans,' because it de-

scribes one of the main objectives of German foreign policy."

Genscher's appeasing remarks produced nothing but sarcastic comments in the Soviet media, such as Radio Moscow, which reported on "the visit of the peace-loving German representative." At the same time, attacks against the commitment of Chancellor Kohl to the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative and against the alleged phenomenon of "neo-Nazi sentiments spreading in the armed forces of West Germany" were fired from Moscow's black propaganda cannons, at the same intensity as before.

Thus, Gorbachov's ultimatum set a time-limit for Genscher's moves on the diplomatic front, without expecting much to come of them. Gorbachov's approach to Bonn is: Confidence is good; confrontation is better.

Gorbachov's decision to put the time limit at the end of 1986 is important, because the period from December to Jan. 25, 1987, will be the "hot phase" of the national elections in West Germany. Police and security officials have expressed fears that riots of "the anti-nuclear movement," attacks by "terrorists," and sabotage against the country's infrastructure—in sum, Soviet low-intensity warfare—will grow sharply in the last weeks of the election campaign.

There is a concrete Soviet interest in Germany's destabilization, and Gorbachov's enemies in Germany are the targets of the terrorists and the violent anti-nuclear movement. This is one of the fronts Gorbachov will open against Bonn. As the German weekly *Der Spiegel*, a conduit for Moscow's black propaganda, reported in its July 21 issue, the rioters' movement is "arming for civil war"—which, the magazine wrote, could break out by no later than the end of 1986. That forecast fits nicely with Gorbachov's time-table.