

Eye on Washington by Myra Collirio

Kirkpatrick becomes a 'Gorbymaniac'

The former U.N. ambassador told the CPAC convention that Gorbachov has repudiated his Leninist convictions.

Former Ambassador to the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick surprised delegates to the annual Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) here this month by proclaiming the "Cold War" to be "very nearly over." Kirkpatrick has long been hailed as a staunch anti-communist by conservatives, hence her invitation to fill a key slot in the CPAC program.

Although she denied it later, the thrust of her CPAC speech was the assertion that the revolutions in Eastern Europe had occurred through the good offices of Gorbachov, who has changed history by abandoning his allegiance to Marxism-Leninism.

Gorbachov has "removed the Soviets' political will to expansion," which in the past, she said, was "driven by an infallible, scientific ideology which justifies an exclusive domination of power by the Communist Party." Two myths which have propped up the Soviet empire have been recently abandoned, she said: 1) the myth that socialism is a superior recipe for dealing with economic and social reality; and 2) the myth that a dictatorship of the Communist Party is a superior form of "democracy."

As a result of abandoning these positions, the fundamental glue of the Soviet system, totalitarianism, has come unstuck, she said. The Soviets "are now engaged in an extraordinary process to dismantle the very foundations of Leninism, including its theories of strategies and tactics, as well as to dismantle the empire."

Gorbachov personally, she added, has "abandoned the Leninist party

concept," in favor of "more or less democratic reforms," and has done this mostly through "restraint in the use of force both internally and externally," which has "opened the way for democratic revolution."

Kirkpatrick then cited the early Bolshevik factional enemy of Stalin, Leon Trotsky, whose theories argued that a "mass revolution of the people is not possible because of the power that the established state has acquired," and that, therefore, "revolutions can only occur through coups at the top."

She followed by saying current developments in the East bloc owe their success to "restraint from the top," thus, at least implicitly, giving credence to Trotsky's theory.

One questioner put Kirkpatrick on the spot, by citing remarks she had made barely a year before, when she proposed, at an American Enterprise Institute panel, that an effective antidote to the "Gorbymania" then sweeping the U.S. and Western Europe was to take the time to actually read Gorbachov's book *Perestroika*.

"I did as you recommended, and read the book," the questioner said. "In it, Gorbachov not only mentions Lenin on virtually every page, but he characterized his perestroika reform policy as the very essence of Leninist practice, similar to what Lenin himself did with his New Economic Policy in the early 1920s."

Kirkpatrick replied, "I believe that Gorbachov has evolved beyond this book, to abandon his adherence to Lenin."

The questioner followed up by asking Kirkpatrick why she did not mention the recent move by Gorbachov to assume unprecedented dictatorial powers for the Soviet presidency. "I assume you don't think this is a Leninist-type tactic by Gorbachov to sidestep the Communist Party as the base of his greatest potential opposition, in order to reassert a totalitarian control every bit as dominant as his predecessors," he said.

"The idea of a strong presidency does not bother me," Kirkpatrick said. "France and other countries have strong presidencies and work well with them." As the questioner walked away from the microphone, Kirkpatrick hastened to defend her view by stressing, "I just don't think you can account for what has happened in Eastern Europe by any other means."

The large CPAC audience was silent during the entire exchange, and at the conclusion, did not afford Kirkpatrick anything like the ovation it provided the earlier panel of Chinese and Vietnamese dissident leaders.

The turnout for the convention appeared larger than in recent years, attributable to the combined factors of an election year and growing discontent with President Bush's foreign policy. While the loyalties with Bush and the Anglo-Soviet "Trust" (as in Kirkpatrick's case), CPAC reflects a political base which only reluctantly went along with Bush's election, but is becoming sickened at Bush's blatant support of Mikhail Gorbachov and the Communist butchers in Beijing.

Kirkpatrick's speech sought to undermine that growing consensus against Bush, and to discredit all those freedom fighters who appeared on the podium at the conference to present the decisive role played by their courageous peoples in the revolutions against communism going on all over the globe.