

Summit's approach brings new Soviet demands and more Bush concessions

by Kathleen Klenetsky

Decked out in full uniform and sporting a chestful of medals, Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, the former chief of the Soviet Armed Forces, marched into Washington in early May and put forth demands that the United States make significant new disarmament concessions, or else face the total collapse of the various arms control negotiations.

With this latest outrageous demand, that great democrat, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachov, is putting a very clear choice before George Bush: Either grovel some more and give Moscow what it wants, or else suffer the political consequences of having no foreign policy "victory" result from the upcoming summit, to parade before an increasingly-restive American population.

In an appearance before a Senate Armed Services subcommittee May 8, and in other Washington public and private forums, Akhromeyev, who currently serves as chief arms control adviser to Gorbachov, delivered a blunt message: If the United States doesn't agree to negotiate on naval force reductions, then the Soviets will continue to keep the strategic arms (START) and conventional forces (CFE) talks deadlocked.

No concessions, no agreements

The Soviet marshal specifically called on the U.S. to negotiate limits on both sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs) and tactical naval battle forces. So far, the U.S. has refused to agree to reductions in these areas because the American strategic deterrent is significantly more dependent upon naval power than is that of the Soviet Union.

Akhromeyev stated flatly that Moscow wants to limit SLCMs. Although he denied it, this position represents a hardening in Moscow's previous stance, and a definite backing-away from the agreement reached by Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze last February. At that time, the Soviets had agreed to deal with the issue by requiring the two sides to simply declare the extent of its SLCM deployments.

While asserting in his congressional testimony that Moscow had accepted the U.S. proposal that both superpowers declare how many of the missiles they will have over the next

five years, Akhromeyev added a big "but": He insisted that Moscow's position is that these numbers must also represent the maximum SLCMs each side is permitted to deploy. "If one were not to do that," he said, "then by building SLCM's, you could bypass the [START] treaty, walk around the treaty, having deployed then several thousand additional SLCMs. And the treaty becomes nonsensical."

Akhromeyev sharply criticized the U.S. for so far refusing to engage in naval arms talks. "We think this policy is unjust and aimed at undermining security and gaining military superiority over the Soviet Union," he said. A decision by the U.S. to change this position "is today one of the decisive preconditions for the improvement of relations between our countries and strengthening of confidence."

Akhromeyev made no effort to soften Moscow's ultimatum that there will be no START or CFE accord without a U.S. concession on the naval issue. When subcommittee member Sen. John Warner (R-Va.) asked him whether the Soviets would insist on naval arms negotiations as a "prerequisite" to forward movement in the START and CFE talks, the Marshal retorted: "You've just said that 100% right." He added: "The Soviet people are beginning to have suspicions and mistrust of the policies of the U.S. because they refuse to enter negotiations on naval forces."

Bush is panicked

The Bush administration has made no definitive reply to Akhromeyev's demands—yet. But even though any move toward acquiescing would mean a lethal blow to U.S. defense capabilities, *EIR* has learned that there is serious discussion among the administration's top echelons that this be done.

"Bush is in a panic right now," one source explained. "Prospects for the summit are looking gloomier by the moment. Just look at what Quayle said in London the other day—that the summit wouldn't be 'totally negative'! And the economy's downswing is making Bush look bad on that front. What he desperately needs is some kind of big public relations plum, preferably a big arms-control breakthrough, to paper over the mess, and Gorbachov isn't going to give

it to him unless Bush is willing to engineer a compromise.”

While no hard evidence exists that Bush will compromise on the naval talks issue, the administration is plying the Soviets with all sorts of other concessions. In early May, the National Security Council approved a new policy that would significantly relax export controls on advanced computers and other high-tech devices, such as microwave technology, to the Soviet Union that clearly could be put to military use.

A week later, while Akhromeyev was in Washington, the administration let it be known that it had informed the Soviet Union that it is ready to halt production of chemical weapons at a date to be agreed upon with the Soviet Union. The decision, a softening in the administration's prior stance, was a last-gasp effort on Bush's part to get some kind of arms agreement out of the summit, in this case, the framework for an accord on chemical weapons, since it had become obvious that there would be no movement on START or CFE.

The change on chemical weapons follows Bush's announcement May 3 that the U.S. would ask NATO to authorize negotiations that could lead to the elimination of all U.S. short-range missiles in Western Europe.

One sign that the Bush men are preparing to meet Soviet demands for new concessions to keep the START and CFE talks alive, came on April 18, when Edward Rowny, the chief U.S. negotiator at the Geneva strategic nuclear arms talks, handed in his resignation, effective June 30. Friends of Rowny put out the word that he was resigning to protest the administration's desperate haste to get a START agreement.

Back in 1979, Rowny resigned as lead delegate to the SALT II talks, a move which contributed to the Senate's refusal to ratify that accord.

On the day he resigned from the Bush team, Rowny gave a speech to the Reserve Officers Association (ROA) warning that Soviets "have toughened their stance. . . . As a matter of fact, they've walked back on some of the agreements and they see the possibility, they think, of getting us to make concessions simply to get an agreement," he said. Rowny cited the Soviet change in position on SLCMs as an example.

Rowny also warned that the Soviets are continuing to modernize their strategic weapons "aggressively." "The bottom line is that the Soviet strategic force that would remain after START reductions have taken place, while smaller, would still be a completely modern, formidable nuclear force," Rowny told the ROA. "The U.S.S.R. is intent on retaining its claim to the status of a superpower equal to the United States that only first-rate nuclear forces can provide."

Soviets exploit internal unrest

The Soviets are trying to bolster their bully-boy blackmail tactics by carefully exploiting the unrest in the Soviet Union to obtain more concessions from the U.S. They are playing

upon Bush's fears that, without new demonstrations of support from the U.S., Gorbachov will be toppled. For example, the current issue of the Soviet magazine *Literary Gazette* carried Shevardnadze's speech to Communist Party members in April, in which he warned that Soviet hard-liners, angry over Gorbachov's "concessions" to the U.S. on arms control (!), may trigger a "social explosion." Copies of the magazine are circulating through the White House and State Department.

And Akhromeyev, in an interview with reporters in Washington May 7, said that Western fears about Soviet political instability are justified. "There is a certain reason for anxiety," he asserted.

The administration, meanwhile, is moving headlong towards massive cutbacks in defense, blindly ignoring the evidence that the Soviets are merely in a period of retrenchment, from which they intend to emerge militarily stronger than before. Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Gen. Colin Powell gave a lengthy interview to the May 7 *Washington Post*, in which he said that the Defense Department needs to conduct an extensive review that could lead to a 25% reduction in the current size of the U.S. Armed Forces within the next four to five years. If applied to the current year's Pentagon budget of \$291 billion, this would translate into a \$73 billion cut in one year alone.

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