

for the development of Congolese offshore oil fields by the end of 1978.

* A new firm named Cominak is about to be formed to undertake Nigerian uranium exploitation. The firm will be owned jointly by Nigeria (31 percent), France's COGEMA (34 percent), Japan (25 percent), and Spain (10 percent), and is the second such joint venture including France formed for Nigerian uranium exploitation.

* Creusot-Loire, the major French steelmaker, and IFP (the French Oil Institute) have signed a new 255 million franc contract with Sonatrach, the Algerian state oil and gas company, for the expansion of Algerian fertilizer production, according to French press reports of April 28.

* Brazilian Minister of Mines and Energy Sigeaki Ueki was in Paris the week of April 23 for the signing of the largest Franco-Brazilian deal ever — construction by

Creusot-Loire of a 1.3 billion francs hydro-electric dam in the Brazilian Amazon.

* The construction of a giant steel complex in Vietnam by Creusot-Loire has for the moment been cancelled by the Vietnamese government.

The French, however, indicated their general willingness to extend increased development credits to Vietnam and Cambodia — against U.S. attempts to organize a boycott — at the Asian Development Bank meeting in Vienna the week of April 23. And the French and Vietnamese governments have been involved in a continuing friendly dialogue on economic cooperation, including joint exploration of Vietnamese off-shore oil reserves.

* The signing of a new Italian-Soviet shipping agreement was reported in the West German financial daily *Handelsblatt* April 25, involving broad coordination of Italian private and state sector and Soviet merchant fleets, just as a 20 percent increase in Italo-Soviet trade for 1977 was being reported.

Soviets: Salt Is Possible Now

Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev and Politburo candidate member Boris Ponomarev hailed Secretary of State Cyrus Vance's recent trip to Moscow as "extremely positive" in separate speeches April 25. In both their statements the Soviet officials reaffirmed their country's support for a successful conclusion of SALT and for a broad range of economic cooperation agreements internationally.

Apart from general statements from the U.S. and Soviets that progress was made during Vance's meetings little detail is available due to the Secretary's policy of clamping down on "leaks" on sensitive negotiating points. "The mark of the seriousness of the negotiations," he told reporters, "is the secrecy surrounding them. If we get into the open it is regarded by (the Soviets) as a propaganda exercise." However, the Christian Science Monitor reported very "firm support" for the SALT negotiations was the response of European NATO members briefed by U.S. negotiator Paul Warnke.

Before the 18th Congress of the Leninist Young Communist league in Moscow, Brezhnev alluded to the vast possibilities for international technology-and-trade deals to become a part of the Soviets' Siberian development programs. The Soviet President discussed ambitious plans for the exploitation of resources for a million-square-mile area in the Ytumen region, commenting that the Soviet Union "does not need masses of human beings, but rather know-how" for these efforts to succeed.

That the Soviets are interested in a broad range of economic cooperation agreements was clear in remarks that Ponomarev made before a meeting of the Second International in Helsinki. Ponomarev called for "restructuring of the whole system of economic relations on the basis of peaceful coexistence."

Here are portions of Soviet President Brezhnev's speech to the Young Communist League:

Brezhnev Assesses Vance Talks

...The most essential and urgent task of our day is to secure a further easing of the war danger and to check the arms build-up. All peoples are conscious of this, and the majority of the governments recognize it. This is also borne out by the fact that a session of the United Nations General Assembly specially devoted to arms limitation and disarmament will open, for the first time in history, a few weeks from now. We wish it success, which we shall actively promote....

As you know, Moscow has just been visited by the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. Cyrus Vance, who came on President Carter's instructions. There was a thorough exchange of opinions. As a result, some progress was made in working out an agreement on strategic arms limitation. Not all problems by far have yet been resolved. We can by no means accept certain positions of the American side. I believe, however, that by reciprocal efforts based on sensible and realistic compromise we can complete the drafting of an agreement that will justly take into account the security interests of both powers. This will enable us substantially to bridle the arms race and therefore also help to strengthen peace....

Along with other peace forces in the world, the Soviet Union is taking active steps to prevent the development of the neutron bomb, which is a new, especially inhuman weapon of mass annihilation. Our stand on this issue is absolutely clear and radical: before it is too late, to conclude an agreement between the countries concerned, reciprocally renouncing manufacture of this weapon. And may mankind be delivered from it, once and for all.

Unfortunately, the United States, which is poised to develop the neutron bomb, has not yet agreed to our proposal. President Carter has recently declared, however, that he has put off a final decision on beginning the manufacture of neutron bombs. This, of course, does not settle

the matter and is at best a half-measure. But I can inform you that we have taken the President's statement into account and that we, too, will not begin production of neutron arms so long as the United States does not do so. Further developments will depend on Washington.

In line with its fundamental policy aimed at reducing the nuclear war danger, the Soviet Union has also decided to accede in due manner to the international treaty banning nuclear weapons in Latin America. Under this treaty, the Soviet Union, like the other nuclear powers, will assume the commitment not to assist any Latin American state in gaining access to nuclear weapons, and not to use such weapons against the states party to the treaty....

We intend that my coming visit to (West Germany) should also help not only to determine the prospects for further broad, mutually advantageous cooperation between our two countries (which is important in itself), but also contribute to the consolidation of detente and universal peace, especially in Europe....

For some years, at the talks in Vienna, we have been working for a considerable reduction of the armed forces of West and East in Europe — without prejudice to the security of any side — but have so far only encountered Western attempts at changing the relation of strength in its favour. True, a few days ago in Vienna the Western countries submitted slightly refurbished proposals. They take account of the standpoint of the socialist states in some respects, though the general imprint of a one-sided approach has clearly remained. Well, this means that the work will have to go on. We are prepared to do everything in our power to find mutually acceptable solutions and to relieve military tension in a region of the world where it is especially great and dangerous.

Everybody ought to know that, far from harbouring any aggressive designs and building up any "strike forces" in Europe for actions against the West, the Soviet Union has always done and will continue to do everything it can to relieve tensions and facilitate agreement. Unlike the NATO countries, we have not been enlarging our armed forces in Central Europe for a long time, and do not intend — this I want to stress most emphatically — do not intend to increase them by a single soldier, by a single tank.

And we call on the Western states to follow this salutary example.

Trying to distort the meaning and goals of Soviet foreign policy, imperialist propaganda maintains that there is a contradiction between our policy of detente and peaceful coexistence and our relations with countries that have thrown off the colonial yoke. The Soviet Union and other socialist countries are being falsely accused of interference in the affairs of young states. Our opponents go to the length of imputing an "expansionist policy" and "stoking up tension." All this, of course, is a fabrication of the purest water with no basis in fact....

Peace, non-interference in internal affairs, respect for independence and territorial integrity, equality, and mutually beneficial cooperation — all these are the indispensable and the most important elements of detente and lasting peace. Such is the policy in Europe, and it is the same in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and everywhere else in the world. And if anyone thinks that the Soviet Union can be diverted from this course with slander and

threats, then he's deeply mistaken....

We must not, nor have we the right to forget that the nuclear peril is still hanging over the world and rousing alarm among nations for their future. Obviously, joint efforts of all the nuclear powers are needed to remove this peril. And each of them can and must do its bit. For its part, the Soviet Union declares unambiguously: We are against the use of nuclear weapons; only extraordinary circumstances, an aggression against our country or its allies by another nuclear power, can compel us to resort to this extreme means of self-defense.

The Soviet Union is doing and will continue to do everything to prevent an atomic war, so that the nations should not fall victim to atomic strikes — neither a first strike nor subsequent ones. This is our firm line, and we shall act accordingly.

Hit Brzezinski 'Linkage' Sabotage

The positive assessment of the Vance trip by the Soviet Union has been accompanied by an increasingly clear perception of the U.S. factional situation. In no uncertain terms, the Soviets are stating that no linkage — National Security Adviser Brzezinski's impediments to the negotiations — will be tolerated in the SALT discussion.

Veiled attacks on Brzezinski have appeared in several Soviet press outlets recently, while a Soviet diplomat was quoted by the New York Times April 24 expressing apprehension that Brzezinski could succeed in reversing the progress toward cooperation that the Vance trip produced. Pravda reiterated this with veiled allusions to "certain circles" in the U.S. that are bent on sabotaging an agreement for arms limitations.

Last week in the Czechoslovak daily Rude Pravo, a commentator for the Soviets' Novosti press agency, pointedly compared Carter to President Harry Truman, who, by following the recommendations of bad advisors, diverted U.S. policy from an alliance with the Soviet Union to the Cold War.

Soviet official Ponomarev also touched on the same point during his speech to the Helsinki Second International meeting April 25, warning, "Those who oppose an accord are placing in danger everything that has been achieved. The enemies of detente do now want to accept a rapprochement between the two countries." Ponomarev called on Europe to exercise more initiative in the detente process, rather than blame the "super-powers" when things are amiss.

"Poisoning the Atmosphere" for Trade

Cooperation between the USSR and the USA is particularly important today, when it is a matter of sparing humanity from the threat of nuclear annihilation....The turn for the better in our relations with the USA has been decisive for lessening the threat of a new world war. But it is precisely this turn which displeases those circles in the U.S., which still do not want to give up their adventurist intentions.

These circles have been against concluding a long-term agreement between the USSR and the USA on

strategic arms limitation (SALT) from the very beginning....

It is typical that even during the Soviet-American negotiations in Moscow, certain circles in the USA and the press connected to them undertook new efforts to poison the atmosphere around the talks with all sorts of provoking cries....

The constructive position of the USSR greatly aided the creation of a favorable atmosphere for the talks, talks which are of such great importance for our two countries, as well as for all peoples of the earth. The existing difficulties on the road to reaching a mutually acceptable SALT agreement are evident. But it is even more evident that given the good will of both sides, they can be surmounted. This is precisely the position which the Soviet Union has taken and holds to.

Soviet Analyst: Will Carter Be Another Truman?
Spartak Beglov, a commentator for the Soviet agency Novosti, in an article on U.S. politics contributed to the Czechoslovak daily Rude Pravo, and published April 20:

In American press commentaries on James Carter's March 17 speech on defense questions, the word "hard" constantly turned up ("sharp warning," "hard speech"). A historical association also comes to mind. In April 1945, when Harry Truman became President of the United States after the sudden death of Franklin Roosevelt, he adopted — on advice from anti-Soviet advisors — a "hard position towards the Russians." Without doubt, this was the cause of the subsequent turn from alliance to cold war.

West Europeans Won't Buy Kissinger's Anti-Salt Myth

The idea that European countries are somehow worried about the prospective success of a new U.S.-Soviet strategic arms agreement is nothing but a myth circulated by circles allied with Henry Kissinger. The governments of both West Germany and France are in fact coordinating their own detente efforts with the U.S. State Department, a fact to be highlighted by the upcoming visit of Soviet leader Brezhnev to Bonn, and the new disarmament proposals to be presented at the special United Nations session later in May.

The actual status of the neutron bomb controversy in Europe is exemplary. Early last week, French newspapers reported without substantiation that the French government had just tested a neutron weapon device on the Pacific island of Mururoa. The very first to praise this "news" were the Chinese, in their weekly *New China*. The Chinese praised France's "independent" nuclear policy for being similar to that which China pursues to "break the monopoly of the United States and the Soviet Union."

French government reaction to this was quick and firm: "The information which has appeared in certain press organs concerning experimentation by France on the neutron bomb is not serious. No experiments of this type have taken place, and none are scheduled."

To counter similar misinformation in West Germany, government spokesman Klaus Bölling told the press April 22 that the neutron weapon will definitely not even be brought up during Brezhnev's talks with Chancellor Helmut Schmidt.

The British Lyin

As the Chinese reaction demonstrates, support for an arms buildup in Western Europe does not come from the continent, but rather from Great Britain and other advocates of the grand plan to encircle the Soviet Union on two fronts, and to undermine current U.S.-Soviet SALT

negotiations. In West Germany, the major advocate of the stationing of the neutron weapon is not even a government official, but an opposition spokesman, Manfred Wörner. Wörner is a member of the London Institute for International and Strategic Studies, and is now in the U.S. holding consultations with Zbigniew Brzezinski and Henry Kissinger.

While the details of the negotiations between U.S. Secretary of State Vance and Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko remain inaccessible to the press, one aspect of the overall effort was presented last week by the NATO representation at the Vienna talks on Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR). NATO's new MBFR proposal is said to be close to the one originally presented by Chancellor Schmidt to President Carter last year, and incorporates a number of concessions which could provide an ending to the current deadlock. The most significant point is that NATO will no longer demand a withdrawal of an entire 68,000-man Warsaw Pact tank army, which in practice meant a Warsaw Pact withdrawal from East Germany. Instead, the same amount of troops could be removed as divisions from either East Germany, Poland, or Czechoslovakia.

Another concession deals with the U.S. offer to withdraw 29,000 U.S. troops from Western Europe. For the first time, NATO is willing to specify the precise units to be withdrawn for two-thirds of that figure. This is an opening towards the Warsaw Pact demand for the setting of strict national quotas for withdrawal.

The major blockage in MBFR — the question of whether there currently exists a balance in forces on both sides — remains unresolved. However, State Department officials are optimistic that the NATO package will not be rejected out of hand by the Warsaw Pact when the talks resume next month.

— John Sigerson