

Gromyko issues an icy warning

by Rachel Douglas

Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko startled listeners at the United Nations General Assembly session Sept. 23 when he delivered one of the toughest speeches of his two-decade-long career. Dispensing with the obligatory praise for the role of the U.N. and the accomplishments of détente, Gromyko launched immediately into an indictment of American foreign policy.

The next day, Soviet President Brezhnev repeated the charges against Washington, in a message to an international parliamentary conference taking place in Bulgaria. He said the war danger has grown since “one of the big powers” shifted nuclear strategic doctrine, referring as Gromyko did to the Presidential Directive 59 on counterforce and “limited nuclear war.”

The sections of Gromyko's speech which we present here, in the unofficial translation of the U.S.S.R. Mission to the United Nations, come from its opening and closing sections.

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Speaking today from this rostrum, I would like to emphasize at the very outset the great importance which this session of the General Assembly would have if it were a success. In view of the specific character of the situation in the world today, it is particularly essential for the work of the session to be conducted in a constructive atmosphere. . . . We focus attention on this because the international situation has lately become more complicated. This was caused by a sharp turn in the policies of the United States and some other NATO countries.

Let us turn to the facts—they are more telling than words.

Back in May 1978, the NATO countries decided to automatically increase their annual military expenditures almost to the end of this century. Last December, they took a decision to produce and deploy in Western Europe new American medium-range nuclear missile systems, which is designed to change the military strategic situation to the unilateral advantage of the NATO bloc. Simultaneously, Washington also announced its own multibillion-dollar build-up program.

The course the U.S.A. opted for, which cannot be

called anything but militaristic, has manifested itself in the so-called “new nuclear strategy.” Using as a cover arguments concerning the possibility of some “limited” or “partial” use of nuclear weapons—arguments which are a far cry from reality—the architects of this strategy seek to instill in the minds of people the idea of the admissibility and acceptability of a nuclear conflict. This foolhardy concept exacerbates the risk of a nuclear catastrophe, which cannot but cause, and does cause, concern all over the world. . . .

Several propositions have recently been taken up by American foreign policy which, by all appearances, are regarded as its credo. Here is one of them.

This or that region of the world is chosen at will . . . and declared with naked bluntness a U.S. “sphere of vital interests” . . . not just anybody's but American interests, and on top of that—God only knows why—of “vital” interests. . . .

A build-up of U.S. military presence is underway in East Africa where most recently new American military bases have been coming into being. . . .

The anti-Arab Camp David deal has as its direct consequence the unabated tensions in the Middle East where the situation is fraught with perilous unforeseen developments. That should not be overlooked. . . . In short, since the time of the separatist collusion between the U.S.A., Israel and Egypt, the situation in the region has proven to be farther from a genuine peace than ever before. . . .

In another region, the Far East, Washington is striving to strengthen its political and military positions and is heating up militarist trends that are far from waning among certain quarters in Japan. Peking is acting in unison. . . . In recent years, the United States, as well as some other Western countries, have resorted ever more frequently to playing the “China card” in order to use to their own advantage the great-power ambitions of Peking which is itself keeping pace with the most zealous proponents of the position-of-strength policy and is stubbornly and cynically advocating the idea of the inevitability of another world war with never a thought of giving this up. . . .

No responsible politician in the world can remain indifferent to the course pursued by those countries in whose policies the cult of war is becoming a predominant factor. Indeed, even here and now in the host country of the U.N. headquarters, massive propaganda of nuclear war is being waged. Waged, one can say, before the very eyes of the public. But it is not a question of propaganda alone. Plans for such a war are being worked out and discussed, and it is all being done at a government level.

In the atmosphere of militarist frenzy which has of late become so widespread in the United States, there is ever less room left for sound and sober assessments of the world situation and well-considered conclusions for the conduct of policy. . . . ■