

Editorial

Two summits...many questions

The outcome of the two major summits of Thanksgiving week 1981 should give U.S. policymakers a sobering insight into the factional divisions now rending the Soviet Union. West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's meeting with Soviet President Brezhnev in Bonn on Nov. 23 and 24 created an opening for defusing East-West tensions, and especially for solving the growing crisis in the Middle East. The very next day came the vengeful response—triggered by forces within the Soviet Union itself—in the form of the collapse of the Arab League summit.

These events make it all the more urgent that President Ronald Reagan resist the blandishments and pressures of the United Brands crowd exposed in our Special Report, and follow through with his tentative endorsement of the Fahd Plan, the eight-point peace framework proposed by Saudi Crown Prince Fahd. Unless a powerful signal of this sort is forthcoming from the White House, we are facing the rise to power of forces in the Soviet Union who are certainly committed to confrontation on every front; these forces include not only the Russian component of the Club of Rome conspiracy behind "Global 2000," but an increasingly influential group of Soviet military men.

The result of Schmidt's meeting with Brezhnev was that West Germany established itself as the principal European go-between for East and West, filling the vacuum left by former French President Giscard. In talks described by high-level European sources, as "far-reaching," the Middle East was the main area discussed. The final communiqué stressed the need to "concentrate their efforts on the removal of existing sources of tension and the prevention of new situations of conflict." Schmidt was in constant touch with the White House during these talks, and there was a noticeable softening of the Soviet media line on Reagan. The Germans set up their own, parallel consultations with the Soviets to bolster U.S.-Soviet arms control talks in Geneva.

Although the Fahd plan was not mentioned as an explicit agenda item, there can be little doubt that one of the things Schmidt was seeking from Brezhnev was Soviet neutrality on the eight-point peace framework.

For weeks, Saudi diplomacy had been intent on putting that plan on the agenda at the Arab League summit, which opened in Fez, Morocco on Nov. 25. But no sooner had the Schmidt-Brezhnev meeting been successfully concluded, than the Arab League summit blew up.

All indications are that Brezhnev's "hardline" opponents on the Politburo and in the Soviet intelligence service (KGB) pulled the strings on their asset, Syrian President Hafez Assad. Assad had been putting out signals that he would support the Fahd plan in some form. He stopped over in Tripoli en route to Fez, and at that point joined Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi in boycotting the meeting.

The behavior of Assad and Qaddafi was, once again, in perfect synchronization with moves by the Begin government of Israel, which is preparing to invade Lebanon in order to block the Fahd plan, which foresees mutual recognition of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

A scary indication of how rapidly the Soviet faction fight is emerging into the open came when the Soviet Defense Minister, Marshal Kulikov, gave an interview to the Parisian pro-terrorist newspaper *Liberation*, the first such interview he ever granted a non-Soviet publication. What was extraordinary is that the interview, taking a policy line clearly opposed to Brezhnev's embrace of the "peace partnership" with Chancellor Schmidt, was reprinted in the Soviet official military paper *Red Star* on the very day that Brezhnev arrived in Bonn.

Ronald Reagan has, as of this writing, responded positively to the results of the Bonn summit. This could mean the emergence of a "Schmidt-Reagan" alliance comparable to Schmidt's previous collaboration with Giscard. An excellent and in fact crucial beginning to such collaboration would be the Egyptian nuclear development program reported in this week's Economics section. If the Middle East is instead allowed to go the way of Iran—as the "Global 2000" advocates in Moscow, Washington and London want it—then the Soviet Union will have no choice but to adopt a hard-line military posture. The ball is now in Ronald Reagan's court.